

# APPLETONS' JOURNAL.

A MAGAZINE OF GENERAL LITERATURE.

NEW SERIES.]

MAY, 1881.

[No. 59.]

## A QUESTION.

A GREEK IDYL.

By GEORG EBERS,

AUTHOR OF "UARDA," "AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS," ETC., ETC.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART SECOND.

### III.

LYSANDER.

AS Xanthe approached her father's house, Semestre's call and the gay notes of a *monaulus*\* greeted her.

A conjurer had obtained admittance, and was showing his laughing audience the tricks of his trained cocks and hens.

He was a dwarfish, bow-legged little man, with a short neck, on which rested a big head with a very prominent forehead, that shaded his small, piercing eyes like a balcony.

The feathered actors lived in a two-wheeled cart, drawn from village to village, and city to city, by a tiny, gayly-decked donkey.

Three cocks and four hens were now standing on the roof of the cart, looking very comical, for their clever owner, who doubtless knew what pleases the eyes of children and peasants, had colored their white feathers, here and there, with brilliant red and glaring yellow.

Beside the cart stood a pale, sorrowful-looking boy, playing a merry tune on the *monaulus*. Lysander, Xanthe's father, had been helped out of the house into the sunlight, and, seated in his arm-chair of polished olive-wood, was gazing at the show.

As soon as he saw his daughter, he beckoned to her, and stroking her hair, while she pressed her lips to his forehead, said:

"An amusing sight! The two hens obey the

little man as if they were dutiful children. I'm glad he came, for a person like me, forbidden by fate to enjoy the comical things to be seen out of doors, must be grateful when they come in his way. Your feet are twitching, Dorippe. Whenever a flute raises its voice, it moves young girls' limbs, as the wind stirs the leaves of the poplars. You would doubtless like to begin to dance at once."

At these words, Mopsus, keeping time to the music, advanced toward his sweetheart, but Semestre stepped before him, exclaiming half to the lad and half to her master:

"There must be no jumping about now. Whoever dances in the morning will break a leg at night."

Lysander nodded assent.

"Then go into the house, Chloris, and fetch this king of hens a jug of wine, some bread, and two cheeses."

"How many cheeses?" asked the house-keeper.

"Two," replied Lysander.

"One will be more than enough," cried Semestre.—"Bring only one, Chloris."

The invalid smilingly shrugged his shoulders, clasped Xanthe's hand as she stood beside him, and said in so low a tone that the old woman could not hear:

"Haven't I grown like little thick-skull's hens? Semestre commands and I must obey. There she goes after Chloris, to save the second cheese."

Xanthe smiled assent. Her father raised his voice and called to the juggler:

"Well, my little friend, show what your act-

\* A musical instrument, played like our flageolet.

ors can do.—You young people, Mopsus and Dorippe, for aught I care, can dance as long as the monaulous sounds, and Semestre stays in the house."

"We want first to see what the hens can do," cried the dark-haired girl, clinging to her lover's arm, and turning with Mopsus toward the exhibition, which now began again.

There was many an exclamation of astonishment, many a laugh, for, when the little man ordered his largest cock to show its skill in riding, it jumped nimbly on the donkey's back; when he ordered it to clean its horse, it pulled a red feather out of the ornaments on the ass's head; and finally proved itself a trumpeter, by stretching its neck and beginning to crow.

The hens performed still more difficult feats, for they drew from a wooden box for each spectator a leaf of a tree, on which certain characters were visible.

The scrawl was intelligible only to the conjurer, but was said to contain infallible information about the future, and the little man offered to interpret the writing to each individual.

This trainer of hens was a clever dwarf, with very quick ears. He had distinctly understood that, through Semestre, he was to lose a nice cheese, and, when the housekeeper returned, ordered a hen to tell each person present how many years he or she had lived in the world.

The snow-white bird, with the yellow head, scratched seventeen times before Xanthe, and, on reaching Mopsus, twenty-three times, which was perfectly correct.

"Now tell us this honorable lady's age too," said the conjurer to the hen.

Semestre told Chloris to repeat what the little man had said, and was already reflecting whether she should not let him have the second cheese, in consideration of the "honorable lady," when the hen began to scratch again.

Up to sixty she nodded assent, as she watched the bird's claw; at sixty-five she compressed her lips tightly, at seventy the lines on her brow announced a coming storm, at eighty she struck the ground violently with her myrtle staff, and, as the hen, scratching faster and faster, approached ninety, and a hundred, and she saw that all the spectators were laughing, and her master was fairly holding his sides, rushed angrily into the house.

As soon as she had vanished behind the doors, Lysander threw the man half a drachm, and, clapping his hands, exclaimed:

"Now, children, kick up your heels; we sha'n't see Semestre again immediately.—You did your business well, friend; but now come here and interpret your hen's oracles."

The conjurer bowed, by bending his big head

and quickly raising it again, for his short back seemed to be immovable, approached the master of the house, and with his little round fingers grasped at the leaf in Lysander's hand; but the latter hastily drew it back, saying:

"First this girl, then I, for her future is long, while mine—"

"Yours," interrupted the dwarf, standing before Lysander—"yours will be a pleasant one, for the hen has drawn for you a leaf that means peaceful happiness."

"A violet-leaf!" exclaimed Xanthe.

"Yes, a violet-leaf," repeated the conjurer. "Put it in my hand. There are—just look here—there are seven lines, and seven—everybody knows that—seven is the number of health. Peaceful happiness in good health, that is what your oracle says."

"The gods owe me that, after suffering so long," sighed Lysander. "At any rate, come back here in a year, and if your cackling Pythia and this little leaf tell the truth, and I am permitted to bring it to you without support or crutch, I'll give you a stout piece of cloth for a new cloak; yet nay, better try your luck in six months, for your chiton looks sicker than I, and will hardly last a whole year."

"Not half a one," replied the conjurer, with a sly smile. "Give me the piece of stuff to-day, that, when I come back in a month, I may have suitable garments when I amuse the guests at the feast given for your recovery. I'm no giant, and shall not greatly impair your store."

"We'll see what can be done," replied Lysander, laughing, "and if, when you return in a month, I don't turn you from the door as a bad prophet, in spite of your fine clothes, your flute-player shall have a piece of linen for his thin limbs. But now foretell my daughter's future, too."

The dwarf took Xanthe's leaf from her hand, and said:

"This comes from an olive-tree, is particularly long, and has a light and dark side. You will live to a great age, and your life will be more or less happy as you shape it."

"As you shape it," repeated the girl. "That's a real hen's oracle. 'As people do, so things will be,' my nurse used to say every third word."

Disappointed and angry, she threw the leaf on the ground, and turned her back on the little man.

The conjurer watched her keenly and searchingly, as not without difficulty he picked up the leaf. Then glancing pleasantly at her father, he called her back, pointed with his finger to the inner surface, and said:

"Just look at these lines, with the little strokes here at the end. That's a snail with horns. A

slow creature! It warns people not to be over-hasty. If you feel inclined to run, check your steps and ask where the path will lead."

"And move through life like a cart creaking down into the valley with drags on the wheels," interrupted Xanthe. "I expected something different from schoolmasters' lessons, from the clever hen that loaded Semestre with so many years."

"Only question her about what is in your heart," replied the little man, "and she won't fail to answer."

The young girl glanced irresolutely at the conjurer, but repressed the desire to learn more of the future, fearing her father's laughter. She knew that, when Lysander was well and free from pain, nothing pleased him so much as to tease her till she wept.

The invalid guessed what was passing in his little daughter's mind, and said, encouragingly:

"Ask the hen. I'll stop both ears while you question the oracle. Yes, yes, one can scarcely hear his own voice for the monaulus and the shouts of the crazy people yonder. Such sounds lure those who are fond of dancing, as surely as a honeycomb brings flies. By the dog! there are four merry couples already! Only I miss Phaon. You say the couch in my brother's house has grown too hard for him, and he has found softer pillows in Syracuse. With us the day began long ago, but in the city perhaps they haven't quite finished with yesterday. I'm sorry for the fine fellow."

"Is it true," asked Xanthe, blushing, "that my uncle is seeking a rich bride for him in Messina?"

"Probably, but in courtship one does not always reach the desired goal. Has Phaon told you nothing about his father's wishes? Question the conjurer, or he'll get his new clothes with far too little trouble. Save me the reproach of being a spendthrift."

"I don't wish it; what is the use of such folly?" replies Xanthe, with flushed cheeks, preparing to go into the house.

Her father shrugged his shoulders, and, turning his head, called after her:

"Do as you please, but cut a piece from the brown woolen cloth, and bring it to the conjurer."

The young girl disappeared in the house. The tune which the boy drew from the monaulus again and again sounded monotonous, but the young people constantly grew more mirthful; higher and higher sprang the bounding feet.

The ribbons fluttered as if a storm had seized them; many a gay garment waved; and there was no end to the shouts and clapping of hands in time with the music.

When Mopsus, or any other lad, raised his voice unusually loud, or a young girl laughed in the overflowing joy of her heart, Lysander's eyes sparkled like sunshine, and he often raised his hands and swayed merrily to and fro to the measure of the music.

"Your heart really dances with the young people," said the conjurer.

"But it lacks feet," replied Lysander, and then he told him about his fall, and the particulars of his sufferings, the danger in which he had been, the remedies used, and the final convalescence. He did this with great pleasure, for it always relieved his mind when he was permitted to tell the story of his life to a sympathizing auditor, and few had listened more attentively than did the conjurer, partly from real interest, partly in anticipation of the cloth.

The little man frequently interrupted Lysander with intelligent questions, and did not lose patience when the speaker paused to wave his hand to the merry group.

"How they laugh and enjoy themselves!" the invalid again exclaimed. "They are all young, and before I had this fall—"

The sentence was not finished, for the notes of the monaulus suddenly ceased, the dancers stopped, and, instead of the music and laughter, Semestre's voice was heard; but at the same time Xanthe, carrying a small piece of brown cloth over her arm, approached the sick man. The latter at first looked at his daughter's flushed face with some surprise, then again glanced toward the scene of the interrupted dance, for something was happening there which he could not fully approve, though it forced him to laugh aloud.

The young people, whose sport had been interrupted, had recovered from their fright and joined in a long chain.

Mopsus led the saucy band.

A maiden followed each youth, and the whole party were united, for each individual grasped the person in front with both hands.

Singing a rhythmical dancing-tune, with the upper portion of the body bent forward, and executing dainty steps with their feet, they circled faster and faster around the furious housekeeper.

The latter strove to catch first Chloris, then Dorippe, then some other maiden, but ere she succeeded the chain separated, joining again behind her ere she could turn. Mopsus and his dark-haired sweetheart were again the leaders. When the ring broke the youths and maidens quickly grasped each other again, and the chain of singing, laughing lads and lasses once more whirled around the old woman.

For some time the amused master of the house could not succeed in shaking his head dis-

approvingly; but when the old housekeeper, who had never ceased scolding and shaking her myrtle staff, began to totter from anger and excitement, Lysander thought the jest was being carried too far, and, turning to his daughter, exclaimed:

"Go, rescue Semestre and drive those crazy people away. Fun must not go beyond proper bounds."

Xanthe instantly obeyed the command: the chain parted, the youths hurrying one way, the maidens another; the lads escaped, and so did all the girls except dark-haired Dorippe, who was caught by Semestre and driven into the house with angry words and blows.

"There will be tears after the morning dance," said Lysander, "and I advise you, friend, if you want to avoid a scolding yourself, to leave the place at once with your feathered artists.—Give the man the cloth, Xanthe."

Xanthe handed the brown woolen stuff to the conjurer.

She blushed faintly as she did so, for, while attempting to cut from the piece a sufficient quantity, Semestre had snatched the knife from her hand, exclaiming rudely:

"Half that is twice too much for the insolent rascal."

The little man took the scanty gift, spread it out to its full extent, and, turning to Lysander, said:

"At our age people rarely experience new emotions, but to-day, for the first time since I stopped growing, I wish I was still smaller than I am now."

The invalid had shaken his head discontentedly at sight of the tiny piece, and, as the conjurer was refolding it over his knee, loosed from his shoulders the chlamys he himself wore, saying gravely:

"Take this cloak, for what Lysander promises he does not perform by halves."

The last words were addressed to Semestre as well as the dwarf, for the old housekeeper, with panting breath and trembling hands, now approached her master.

Kind words were not to be expected from her mouth now, but even more bitter and vehement reproaches sprang to her lips as she saw her master give his scarcely worn chlamys to a strolling vagrant, and also presume to reward her economy with taunts.

She had carefully woven the cloak with her own hands, and that, she cried, was the way her labor was valued! There was plenty of cloth in the chests, which Lysander could divide among the buffoons at the next fair in Syracuse. In other countries, even among wild barbarians, white hairs were honored, but here the elders

taught the young people to insult them with jeers and mockery.

At these words the invalid's face turned pale, a dark shadow appeared under his eyes, and an expression of pain hovered around his mouth. He looked utterly exhausted.

Every feature betrayed how the old woman's shrill voice and passionate words disturbed him, but he could not silence her by loud rebukes, for his voice failed, and he therefore sought to make peace by the soothing gestures of his thin hands and his beseeching eyes.

Xanthe felt and saw that her father was suffering, and exclaimed in a fearless, resolute tone:

"Silence, Semestre! your scolding is hurting my father."

These words increased the housekeeper's wrath instead of lessening it. In a half-furious, half-whining tone, she exclaimed:

"So it comes to this! The child orders the old woman. But you shall know, Lysander, that I won't allow myself to be mocked like a fool. That impudent Mopsus is your freed-woman's child, and served this house for high wages, but he shall leave it this very day, so surely as I hope to live until the vintage. He or I! If you wish to keep him, I'll go to Agrigentum and live with my daughter and grandchildren, who send to me by every messenger. If this insolent fellow is more to you than I am, I'll leave this place of ingratitude. In Agrigentum—"

"It is beautiful in Agrigentum!" interrupted the conjurer, pointing with his finger impressively in the direction of this famous city.

"It is delightful there," cried the old woman, "so long as one doesn't meet pygmies like you in the streets."

The housekeeper was struggling for breath, and her master took advantage of the pause to murmur beseechingly, like a child who is to be deprived of something it loves:

"Mopsus must go—merry Mopsus? Nobody knows how to lift and support me so well."

These words softened Semestre's wrath, and, lowering her voice, she replied:

"You will no longer need the lad for that purpose; Leonax, Alciphron's son, is coming to-day. He'll lift and support you as if you were his own father. The people in Messina are friendly and honor age, for, while you jeer at me, they remember the old woman, and will send me a beautiful matron's robe for the future wedding."

The invalid looked inquiringly at his daughter, and the latter answered, blushing:

"Semestre has told me. She informed me, while I was cutting the cloth, that Leonax would come as a suitor."

"May he fare better than Alkamenes and the



others, whom you sent home! You know I will not force your inclinations, but, if I am to lose Mopsus, I should like a pleasant son. Why has Phaon fallen into such foolish, evil ways? The young Leonax—"

"Is of a different stamp," interrupted Semestre.—"Now come, my dove, I have a thousand things to do."

"Go," replied Xanthe. "I'll come directly.—You will feel better, father, if you rest now. Let me help you into the house, and lie down on the cushions for a time."

The young girl tried to lift her father, but her strength was too feeble to raise the wearied man. At last, with the conjurer's help, he succeeded in rising, and the latter whispered earnestly in his ear:

"My hens tell me many things, but another oracle behind my forehead says, You are on the way to recovery, but will not reach the goal unless you manage the old woman, who has just limped into the house, as I do the birds I train."

"And what do you do with them?"

"I teach them to obey me, and, if I see that they persist in having their own way, drive them off and seek others."

Lysander shrugged his shoulders; and, as, leaning on his daughter, he tottered slowly forward, almost falling on the threshold, Xanthe took a silent vow to give him a son on whom he could firmly depend—a stalwart, reliable man.

#### IV.

##### THE TWO SUCKING PIGS.

FIFTEEN minutes had passed, and the old housekeeper's face still glowed—no longer from anger, but because, full of zeal, she now molded cakes before the bright flames on the hearth, now basted the roast on the spit with its own juices.

Beside her stood old Jason, who could not give up his young master's cause for lost, and exposed himself once more to the arrows of Semestre's angry words, because he bitterly repented having irritated instead of winning her.

Unfortunately, his soothing speeches fell on hard ground, for Semestre scarcely vouchsafed a reply, and at last distinctly intimated that he interrupted her.

"Attention," she said, "is the mother of every true success. It is even more needful in cooking than in weaving; and if Leonax, for whom my hands are busy, resembles his father, he knows how to distinguish bad from good."

"Alciphron," replied Jason, "liked the figs on our arbor by the house better than yours."

"And while he was enjoying them," cried the old woman, "you beat him with a hazel rod. I can hear him cry now, poor little dear!"

"Too many figs are bad for the stomach," replied the old man, very slowly and distinctly, but not too loud, that he might not remind her of her deafness. Then seeing Semestre smile, he drew nearer, and with winning cheerfulness continued: "Be sensible, and don't try to part the children, who belong to each other. Xanthe, too, is fond of figs, and, if Leonax shares his father's taste, how will the sweet fruit of your favorite trees fare, if Hymen unites them in marriage? Phaon doesn't care for sweet things. But seriously: though his father may seek twenty brides for him, he himself wants no one but Xanthe. And can you deny that he is a handsome, powerful fellow?"

"So is the other," cried Semestre, wholly unmoved by these words. "Have you seen your favorite this morning? No! Do you know where he slept last night and the night before?"

"On his couch, I suppose."

"In your house?"

"I don't run after the youth, now he is grown up."

"Neither shall we! You are giving yourself useless trouble, Jason, and I earnestly beg you not to disturb me any longer now, for a dark spot is already appearing on the roast. Quick, Chloris—lift the spit from the fire!"

"I should like to bid Lysander good morning."

"He is tired, and wants to see no one. The servants have vexed him."

"Then I'll stay awhile in the garden."

"To try your luck with Xanthe? I tell you, it's trouble wasted, for she's dressing her hair to receive our guest from Messina; and, if she were standing where those cabbage-leaves lie, she wouldn't contradict me if I were to repeat what you heard from my lips this morning at sunrise. Our girl will never become Phaon's wife until I myself offer a sacrifice to Aphrodite, that she may fill Xanthe's heart with love for him."

Jason shrugged his shoulders, and was preparing to turn his back on the old woman, when Dorippe entered and approached the hearth. Her eyes were red with weeping, and in her arms she carried a round, yellowish-white creature that, struggling and stretching its little legs in the air, squealed in a clear, shrill voice, even more loudly and piteously than a hungry babe.

It was a pretty, well-fattened sucking pig.

Jason looked at it significantly, but Semestre snatched it out of the girl's arms, pressed it to her own bosom, turned her back upon the old man with meaning resolution, and said, just loud enough for him alone to hear:

"A roast for the banquet."

As soon as Jason had left the room, she put the nicely-washed pig on a little wooden bench, ordered Chloris to see that it did not soil itself; drew from a small box, standing beside the loom, one blue ribbon and two red ones; tied the former carefully around the little creature's curly tail, and the latter about its ears; lifted the pig again, looked at it as a mother gazes at her prettily dressed darling, patted its fattest parts with her right hand, and ordered Dorippe to carry it to Aphrodite's temple immediately.

"It's a beautiful creature, absolutely faultless, and the priest must slay it at once in honor of the gracious goddess. I will come myself, as soon as everything is ready here; and, after such a gift, foam-born Cypris will surely grant my petition. Hide the little treasure carefully under your robe, that no one may see it."

"It struggles and squeals when I carry it," replied the girl.

"Yes, it does squeal," said the old woman. "Wait, I'll look for a suitable basket."

The housekeeper went out, and, when she returned, cried:

"Mopsus is standing outside with our donkey, to carry bag and baggage to his mother's house, but he's still in Lysander's service to-day. Let him put the creature in a basket on the donkey's back, and then he can quickly carry it to the temple—at once and without delay, for, if I don't find it on the goddess's altar in an hour, you shall answer for it! Tell him this, and then get some rosemary and myrtle to garland our hearth."

Mopsus did not hasten to perform the errand. He had first to help Dorippe cut the green branches, and, while thus engaged, sought pleasant gifts not only on the ground, but from his sweetheart's red lips, then moved up the mountain with his donkey, very slowly, without urging the animal. The latter carried one basket on the right and one on the left of his saddle, wore bright cock's feathers on its head, and had a fiery-red bridle. It looked gay enough in its finery, yet hung its head, though far less sorrowfully than its young driver, whom Semestre had exiled from his master's house and the girl he loved.

He spent half an hour in reaching the sanctuary.

Old Jason, at the same time, was standing before the little grove beside the steps leading to the cellar.

The worthy man cradled in his arms, as Dorippe had just done in Lysander's house, a little squealing creature, and this, too, was a pig; but it wore no ribbon around its little tail and ears, was not particularly fat, and had numerous

black spots under its scanty bristles and on its sharp snout.

The old man was gazing at the innocent creature by no means tenderly, but with the utmost indignation. He had good reason to be angry, for the priest had not thought it worthy for a sacrifice to the goddess, it was so poor in fat and full of bad marks.

As soon as he saw Semestre's offering, he had hurried home to anticipate her with his own, and win first the goddess's heart for his young master.

Now he stood considering whether he should strangle the unlucky creature, or carry it back to its mother.

Like a frugal steward, he decided upon the latter course, and, just as he was comparing the image of the lean, spotted animal with its future well-rounded condition, he heard the hoofs of the donkey driven by Mopsus, the heavy thud of a stick on the elastic flesh, and after every blow, the shout, "Semestre!"

Directly after Mopsus and his donkey reached the old man, and as the youth, without looking to the right or left, dealt the animal another thwack, again uttering the housekeeper's name, and in connection with it a succession of harsh, abusive words, Jason looked at the young man with approval, nay, almost tenderly.

The latter usually shouted a loud "Joy be with you!" whenever he met the old man, but to-day answered his greeting only with a sorrowful nod and low murmur.

The steward had stepped in front of him, laid his hard hand on the donkey's head, and asked:

"Do you call your ass Semestre?"

Mopsus blushed, and answered:

"In future I shall call all she-asses that, but the old Megera named this one *Jason*."

"Why, see," cried the steward, "how kindly the worthy woman remembers me! But she too was not forgotten, for, whenever you lifted your stick, you thought, I should suppose, of her."

"Indeed I did!" cried Mopsus; then, while stroking the stripes on the donkey's flanks, added kindly:

"Poor Jason, you too have nothing for which to thank the old woman. If you only knew how abominable this woman is—"

"I do know," the steward interrupted, "but she is an old woman, and it does not beseem you to abuse her; she represents the house under its invalid ruler."

"I'd willingly lay both these hands under *his* feet," cried the youth, "but Semestre has driven me out of his service for nothing, away from here and Dorippe, and where can I find a place in the neighborhood?"

The almost whining tone of the complaint

contrasted oddly with the appearance of the tall, broad-shouldered Mopsus, yet tears filled his eyes, as he now told the steward about the juggler, the dance, Semestre's anger, his banishment from Lysander's house, and the housekeeper's commission to carry a sucking pig to Aphrodite's temple for her.

Jason listened with only partial attention, for the low grunting of a pig, that reached his ears from one of the baskets on the donkey, seemed to him far more interesting than the poor fellow's story. He knew the ways of every domestic animal, and such sounds were only uttered by a little pig that felt comfortably fat, and lived under favorable circumstances.

A great thought awoke in his mind, and must have pleased him hugely, for his eyes began to sparkle, his mouth puckered in a smile, and he looked exactly like a satyr thrusting his thick lips toward the largest and ripest bunches of grapes in the vineyard.

When Mopsus paused, he angrily noticed what an enlivening influence his sorrowful story had had upon the old man, but soon laughed too; for, ere he could give expression to his dissatisfaction, Jason had opened the basket on the left of the donkey, taken out Semestre's gayly decked pig, put his own lanky animal in its place, and said, giggling with pleasure:

"After what Semestre has done to a poor fellow like you, she doesn't deserve the favor of our goddess. Let *me* offer Aphrodite this most charming of pigs, and you offer my little beast in the housekeeper's name; then her petition will certainly find no hearing."

At these words Mopsus's broad face brightened, and, after laughing loudly, he struck his heel in the palm of his left hand, turned on the heel of his right foot, and exclaimed:

"Yes, that will be just right."

True, directly after, he looked as doubtful as if an invisible myrtle staff had been swung over his back, and asked:

"But if she notices it?"

"I know how we'll manage," replied the old man, and, putting Semestre's pig in Mopsus's arms, took the ribbons from its ears and curly tail.

Meantime, the little animal grunted as piteously as if it noticed that its finery was being stolen and its beauty impaired.

And when Jason, with Mopsus's assistance, put the same ribbons on his own lank pig, it looked neither better nor prouder than before, for it was no lucky animal, and did not appreciate beautiful gifts.

## V.

## THE WALK TO THE SEA.

WHILE the priest of Aphrodite received Jason's gift, praised the pig's beauty, and promised to slay it immediately, but said he would only accept the lean animal Mopsus offered in Semestre's name for the sake of its ornaments and the giver, Xanthe came out of her father's house. She wore her handsomest garments, and had carefully arranged her beautiful fair hair, reflecting as she did so on many different things, for maidens are fond of thinking when seated at the loom or spinning-wheel, or quietly occupied in adorning their tresses.

Semestre followed close behind, and gave her a small knife, saying:

"It is seemly to decorate the door of a welcome guest with flowers. The bushes are full of roses now, so go and cut as many as will be needed for a handsome garland, but gather only red or yellow flowers, no white ones, for they bring no good fortune. You will find the largest bowl near the bench by the sea."

"I know."

"Wait and hear me out."

"Well?"

"The weather is delightful, there was a light breeze from the north during the night, so it may happen that the ship from Messina will arrive before noon."

"Then let me go down."

"Go and watch for the sails. If you see ours, hurry back and tell Chloris to call me, for I must go to the temple of Cypris."

"You?" asked Xanthe, laughing.

"I, and you are the last person who should sneer at the errand; nay, you can accompany me."

"No! I will cut the roses."

These words were uttered in a tone the housekeeper knew well. Whenever Xanthe used it, she insisted upon having her own way, and did what she pleased, while Semestre, who usually never admitted that her hearing was no longer so keen as in former days, in such cases willingly pleaded her deafness, in order to avoid a retreat.

To-day she particularly shrank from irritating the easily excited girl, and therefore replied:

"What did you say? Wouldn't it be better for you to go and cut the roses immediately, my dove? Make haste, for the vessel for which you are to watch bears your happiness. How beautiful the ornaments Leonax is bringing will look! We have never yet seen the like, I imagine. The people in Messina haven't forgotten poor me either, for I heard whispers about a robe such as matrons wear. It is—it might be—well, we shall see."

Tittering, and almost embarrassed, she fixed her eyes upon the ground, reminded Xanthe once more to have her called as soon as the ship from Messina appeared, and then, leaning on her myrtle staff, tottered up the path leading to the temple of the goddess.

Xanthe did not go directly down to the sea, but approached her uncle's house to seek Phaon with her eyes.

As she could not see him, either in the stables, or the walk lined with fig-trees trained upon espaliers beside the house, she turned quickly away, repressing out of pride her desire to call him.

On the way to the sea she met her uncle's high-shouldered slave. Xanthe stopped and questioned him.

Semestre had told no lie. Phaon had not yet returned from a nocturnal excursion, and for several days had not reached home until just before sunrise.

No, *he* was not the man to offer support to her sick father. He was looking for a wealthy heiress, and forgot his relatives for the sake of dissolute young men and worthless wenches.

This thought hurt her sorely, so sorely that she wanted to weep as she had done by the spring.

But she forced back her tears; not one wet her cheeks, yet it seemed as if her poor heart had obtained eyes to shed them.

The little knife in her hand reminded her of her task of cutting roses, and watching for the ship which was to bring her uncle's son from Messina.

If Leonax was what Semestre described him, she would not repel him like the other suitors, whom she had rejected with laughing lips.

Yes, she would become his wife, not only for her father's sake, but to punish Phaon.

Sorrow and pain never felt before filled her heart after making this resolution.

Wholly engrossed by these conflicting emotions, instead of going down to the sea, she walked straight on till she reached the great gate that led to her own home.

There she remembered the object of her errand, and was just turning back, when the conjurer, who was resting outside the gate with his cart in the shadow of the fence, called:

"You are obeying my advice, beautiful Xanthe, and move as thoughtfully as a sophist."

"Then you must not disturb me," cried the girl, raising her head defiantly.

"Pardon me if I did so," replied the other, "but I wanted to tell you that I might perhaps know of aid for your father. In my home—"

"Where is your home?"

"In Messina."

"Messina!" exclaimed Xanthe, eagerly.

"A very experienced physician lives there," interrupted the conjurer.

"No one has helped my father."

"Yet—"

"Then come in and speak to him."

"I'm afraid of the cross old woman."

"She has gone out, and you will find father alone."

"Then I'll go to him."

"Did you say you were from Messina?"

"That is my home."

"Do you know my uncle Alciphron, the merchant?"

"Certainly. He owns the most ships in the place."

"And his son Leonax, too?"

"I often saw him, for my hut stands opposite to the landing-place of your uncle's vessels, and the youth always superintends the loading and unloading. He, if any one, belongs to those spoiled children of fortune who disgust poor dwarfs like me with life, and make us laugh when people say there are just gods above."

"You are blaspheming."

"I only say what others think."

"Yet you too were young once."

"But I was a dwarf, and he resembles Achilles in stature; I was poor and he does not know what to do with his wealth; maidens fled from me as they seek him; I was found in the streets; and a father still guides, a loving mother kisses him. I don't envy him, for whoever enters life an orphan is spared the pain of becoming one afterward."

"You speak bitter words."

"He who is beaten does not laugh."

"So you envy Leonax his prosperity?"

"No, for, though I might have such excellent cause to complain, I envy no king, for there is but one person whose inmost heart I know thoroughly, and that one stands before you."

"You revile Fate, and yet believe it possible that we may all have more sorrow to bear than you."

"You have understood me rightly."

"Then admit that you may be happier than many."

"If only most of the contented people were not stupid. However, this morning I am pleased, because your father gave me this new garment, and I rarely need despair; I earn enough bread, cheese, and wine with the aid of my hens, and am not obliged to ask any man's favor. I go with my cart wherever I choose."

"Then you ought to thank the gods, instead of accusing them."

"No, for absence of suffering is not happiness."



"And do you believe Leonax happy?"

"Hitherto he seemed to be, and the fickle goddess will perhaps remain faithful to him longer than to many others, for he is busy from early till late, and is his father's right hand. At least he won't fall into one of the pits Fate digs for mortals."

"And that is—?"

"Weariness. Thousands are worse, and few better, than your cousin; yes, the maiden he chooses for his wife may rejoice."

Xanthe blushed, and the dwarf, as he entered the gate, asked:

"Is Leonax wooing his little cousin?"

"Perhaps."

"But the little cousin has some one else in her mind."

"Who told you so?"

"My hens."

"Then remember me to them!" cried Xanthe, who left the juggler and ran straight toward the path leading to the sea.

Just at the point where the latter branched off from the broader road used by carts as well as foot-passengers, stood a singular monument, before which the young girl checked her steps.

The praise the conjurer had lavished on Leonax afforded her little pleasure; nay, she would rather have heard censure of the Messina suitor, for, if he corresponded with the dwarf's portrait, he would be the right man to supply a son's place to her father, and rule as master over the estate, where many things did not go on as they ought. Then she must forget the faithless night reveler, Phaon—if she could.

Every possession seems most charming at the time we are obliged to resign it, and never in all her life had Xanthe thought so tenderly and longingly of Phaon as now and on this spot.

The monument, overgrown with blossoming vines, before which she paused, was a singular structure, that had been built of brick between her own and her uncle's garden.

It was in the form of a strong wall, bounded by two tall pillars. In the wall were three rows of deep niches with arched ceilings, while on the pillars, exquisitely painted upon a brownish-red ground, were the Genius of Death lowering his torch before an offering-altar, and Orpheus, who had released his wife from the realm of shadows and was now bearing her to the upper world.

Many of the niches were still empty, but in some stood vases of semi-transparent alabaster.

The newest, which had found a place in the lowest row, contained the ashes of the young girl's grandfather, Dionysius, and his wife, and another pair of urns the two mothers, her own and Phaon's.

Both had fallen victims on the same day to the plague, the only pestilence that had visited this bright coast within the memory of man. This had happened eight years ago.

At that time Xanthe was still a child, but Phaon a tall lad.

The girl passed this place ten times a day, often thought of the beloved dead, and, when she chanced to remember them still more vividly, waved a greeting to the dear ashes, because some impulse urged her to give her faithful memory some outward expression.

Very rarely did she recall the day when the funeral-pile had cooled, and the ashes of the two mothers, both so early summoned to the realm of shadows, were collected, placed in the vases, and added to the other urns. But now she could not help remembering it, and how she had sat before one of the pillars of the monument weeping bitterly, and asking herself again and again, if it were possible that her mother would never, never come to kiss her, speak caressing words, arrange her hair and pet her; nay, for the first time she longed to hear even a sharp reproof from the lips now closed for ever.

Phaon was standing by the other pillar, his eyes covered with his right hand.

Never before or since had she seen him look so sad, and it cut her to the heart when she noticed that he trembled as if a chill had seized him, and, drawing a long breath, pushed back the hair, which like a coal-black curtain, covered half his forehead. She had wept bitterly, but he shed no tears. Only a few poor words were exchanged between them in that hour, but each one still echoed in her ears to-day, as if hours instead of years intervened between that time and now.

"*Mine* was so good," Xanthe had sobbed; but he only nodded, and, after fifteen minutes had passed, said nothing but, "And mine too."

In spite of the long pause that separated the girl's words from the boy's, they were tenderly united, bound together by the thought, dwelling uninterruptedly in both childish hearts, "My mother was so good."

It was again Xanthe who, after some time, had broken the silence by asking:

"Whom have I now?"

Again it was long ere Phaon, for his only answer, could repeat softly:

"Yes, whom?"

They were trivial words, but they expressed the deep wretchedness which only a child's heart can feel.

Scarcely had they found their way over the boy's lips when he pressed his left hand also over his eyes, his breast heaved convulsively, and



a torrent of burning tears coursed down his cheeks.

Both children still had their fathers, but they forgot them in this hour.

Who, if the warm sun were extinguished, would instantly remember that the moon and stars remain?

As Phaon wept so violently, Xanthe's tears began to flow more slowly, and she gazed at him a long time with ardent sympathy, unperceived by the lad, for he still covered his eyes with his hands.

The child had met a greater grief than her own, and, as soon as she felt that she was less sorrow-stricken than her playfellow, a desire to soothe his sorrow arose.

As the whole plant, with its flowers and fruit, is contained in the sprouting seed, so, too, in the youngest girl lives the future mother, who dries all tears, cheers and consoles.

As Phaon remained in the same attitude, Xanthe rose, approached him, timidly pulled his cloak, and said:

"Come down to our house; I will show you something pretty: four young doves have come out of the shell; they have big, wide bills, and are very ugly."

Her playmate removed his hands from his eyes and answered kindly:

"No, let me alone, please."

Xanthe now took his hand and drew him away, saying:

"Yes, you must come; the pole of my cart is broken."

Phaon had been so accustomed to be always called upon whenever there were any of the little girl's playthings to mend that he obeyed, and the next day allowed her to persuade him to do many things for which he felt no inclination.

He yielded in order not to grieve her, and, as he became more cheerful and even joined in her merry laugh, Xanthe rejoiced as if she had released him from his sorrow. From that time she claimed his services as eagerly as before, but in her own heart felt as if she were his little mother, and watched all his actions as though specially commissioned to do so.

When she had grown up she did not hesitate to encourage or blame him, nay, was often vexed or grieved about him, especially if in the games or dances he paid more attention than she deemed reasonable to other girls, against whom there was much or little objection, nay, often none at all. Not on her own account, she said to herself, it could make no difference to her, but she knew these girls, and it was her duty to warn him.

She willingly forgave many things, but on this point was extremely rigid, and even allowed anger to carry her to the verge of rudeness.

Now, as she stood beside the sepulchre, she thought of the hour when she had comforted him, of her care for him and how it had all been vain, for he spent his nights in rioting with flute-playing women. Yes, Semestre had said so. He seemed to Xanthe lost, utterly lost.

When she wept in the morning beside the spring, it was not, she now thought, because of the heiress from Messina; no, the tears that had sprung to her eyes were like those a mother sheds for her erring son.

She seemed to herself extremely venerable, and would have thought it only natural if gray hair instead of golden had adorned the head over which scarcely seventeen years had passed.

She even assumed the gait of a dignified matron, but it was hardly like a mother, when, on her way to the rose-bushes by the sea, she studiously strove to misunderstand and pervert everything good in Phaon, and call his quiet nature indolence, his zeal to be useful to her weakness, his taciturn manner mere narrow-mindedness, and even his beautiful, dreamy eyes sleepy.

With all this, the young girl found little time to think of the new suitor; she must first shatter the old divine image, but every blow of the hammer hurt her as if it fell upon herself.

## VI.

### THE ANSWER.

THE rose-bush to which Xanthe went grew on the dike that belonged in common to her father and uncle, beside a bench of beautifully polished white marble.

Many a winter had loosened the different blocks, and bordered them with yellow edges.

Even at a distance, the girl saw that the seat was not vacant. The brook that flowed from the spring to the sea ran beneath it, and the maid-servants were in the habit of washing the household linen in its swift current.

Were they now using the bench to spread out the garments they had rinsed?

No! A man lay on the hard marble, a man who had drawn his light cloak over his face to protect himself from the rays of the sun, now rising higher and higher.

His sandaled feet and ankles, bandaged as if for journeying, appeared beneath the covering.

By these feet Xanthe quickly recognized the sleeping youth.

It was Phaon. She would have known him, even if she had only seen two of his fingers.

The sun would soon reach its meridian height, and there he lay asleep.

At first it had startled her to find him here,

but she soon felt nothing but indignation, and again the image of the flute-playing women, with whom he must have reveled until thus exhausted, rose before her mind.

"Let him sleep," she murmured proudly and contemptuously; she passed him, cut a handful of roses from the bushes covered with crimson and yellow blossoms, sat down on the vacant space beside his head, watched for the ship from Messina, and, as it did not come, began to weave the garland.

She could do the work here as well as anywhere else, and told herself that it was all the same to her whether Phaon or her father's linen lay there. But her heart belied these reflections, for it throbbed so violently that it ached.

And why would not her fingers move; why could her eyes scarcely distinguish the red roses from the yellow ones?

The garden was perfectly still, the sea seemed to slumber, and, if a wave lapped the shore, it was with a low, almost inaudible murmur.

A butterfly hovered like a dream over her roses, and a lizard glided noiselessly, like a sudden thought, into a chink between the stones at her feet. Not a breath of air stirred, not a leaf or a twig fell from the trees.

Yonder, as if slumbering under a blue veil, lay the Calabrian coast, while nearer and more distant, but always noiselessly, ships and boats, with gently swelling sails, glided over the water. Even the cicadas seemed to sleep, and everything around was as still, as horribly still, as if the breath of the world, blooming and sparkling about her, was ready to fail.

Xanthe sat spellbound beside the sleeper, while her heart beat so rapidly and strongly that she fancied it was the only sound audible in this terrible silence.

The sunbeams poured fiercely on her head, her cheeks glowed, a painful anxiety overpowered her, and certainly not to rouse Phaon, but merely to hear some noise, she coughed twice, not without effort. When she did so the third time, the sleeper stirred, removed from his face the end of the cloak that had covered his head, slowly raised himself a little, and, without changing his recumbent posture, said simply and quietly, in an extremely musical voice:

"Is that you, Xanthe?"

The words were low, but sounded very joyous.

The girl merely cast a swift glance at the speaker, and then seemed as busily occupied with her roses as if she were sitting entirely alone.

"Well?" he asked again, fixing his large dark eyes upon her with an expression of surprise, and waiting for some greeting.

As she remained persistently silent, he exclaimed, still in the same attitude:

"I wish you a joyful morning, Xanthe."

The young girl, without answering this greeting, gazed upward to the sky and sun as long as she could endure the light, but her lips quivered, and she flung the rose she held in her hand among its fellows in her lap.

Phaon had followed the direction of her look, and again broke the silence, saying with a smile, no less quietly than before:

"Yes, indeed, the sun tells me I've been sleeping here a long time; it is almost noon."

The youth's composure aroused a storm of indignation in Xanthe's breast. Her excitable blood fairly seethed, and she was obliged to put the utmost constraint upon herself not to throw her roses in his face.

But she succeeded in curbing her wrath, and displaying intense eagerness, as she shaded her eyes with her hand and gazed toward some ships that appeared in view.

"I don't know what is the matter with you," said Phaon, smoothing with his right hand the black hair that covered half his forehead. "Do you expect the ship from Messina and my father already?"

"And my cousin *Leonax*," replied the girl, quickly, putting a strong emphasis upon the last name.

Then she again gazed into the distance.

Phaon shook his head, and both remained silent for several minutes. At last he raised himself higher, turned his full face toward the young girl, gazed at her as tenderly and earnestly as if he wished to stamp her image upon his soul for life, gently pulled the long, floating sleeve of her peplum, and said:

"I didn't think it would be necessary—but I must ask you something."

While he spoke, Xanthe rested her right elbow on her knee, drummed on her scarlet lips with her fingers, and clasped the back of the marble bench with her outstretched left arm.

Her eyes told him that she was ready to listen, though she still uttered no word of reply.

"I have a question to ask you, Xanthe!" continued Phaon.

"You?" interrupted the girl, with visible astonishment.

"I, who else? Jason told me yesterday evening that our uncle Alciphron had wooed you for his son Leonax, and was sure of finding a favorable reception from old Semestre and your poor father. I went at once to ask you if it were true, but turned back again, for there were other things to be done, and I thought we belonged to each other, and you could not love any one so well as you loved me. I don't like useless words,

and can not tell you what is in my heart, but you knew it long ago. Now you are watching for your cousin Leonax. We have never seen him, and I should think—"

"But I know," interrupted the girl, rising so hastily that her roses fell unheeded on the ground—"but I know he is a sensible man, his father's right hand, a man who would disdain to riot all night with flute-playing women, and have foreign heiresses wooed for him by his relatives."

"I don't do that either," replied Phaon. "Your flowers have dropped on the ground—"

With these words the youth rose, bent over the roses, gathered them together, and offered them to Xanthe with his left hand, while trying to clasp her fingers in his right; but she drew back, saying:

"Put them on the bench, and go up to wash the sleep from your eyes."

"Do I look weary?"

"Of course, though you've lain here till noon."

"But I have scarcely slept for several days."

"And dare you boast of it?" asked Xanthe, with glowing cheeks. "I am not your mother, and you must do as you choose, but if you think I belonged to you because we played with each other as children, and I was not unwilling to give you my hand in the dance, you are mistaken. I care for no man who turns day into night and night into day."

At the last words Xanthe's eyes filled with tears, and Phaon noticed it with astonishment.

He gazed at her sadly and beseechingly, and then fixed his eyes on the ground. At last he began to suspect the cause of her anger, and asked, smiling:

"You probably mean that I riot all night?"

"Yes!" cried Xanthe; she withdrew her hand for the second time, and half turned away.

"Oh!" he replied, in a tone of mingled surprise and sorrow, "you ought not to have believed that."

Xanthe turned, raised her eyes in astonishment, and asked:

"Then where have you been these last nights?"

"Up in your olive-grove with the three *Hermes*."

"You?"

"How amazed you look!"

"I was only thinking of the wicked fellows who have robbed many trees of their fruit. That savage *Korax*, with his thievish sons, lives just beside the wall."

"For your sake, Xanthe, and because your poor father is ill and unable to look after his property, while *Mopsus* and your fishermen and slaves were obliged to go in the ship to *Messina*,

to handle the oars and manage the sails, I always went up as soon as it grew dark."

"And have kept watch there?"

"Yes."

"So many nights?"

"One can sleep after sunrise."

"How tired you must be!"

"I'll make up my sleep when my father returns."

"They say he is seeking the rich *Mentor*'s only daughter for your wife."

"Not with my will, certainly."

"Phaon!"

"I am glad you will give me your hand again."

"You dear, good, kind fellow, how shall I thank you?"

"Anything but that! If you hadn't thought such foolish things about me, I should never have spoken of my watch up yonder. Who could have done it except myself, before *Mopsus* came back?"

"No one, no one but you! But now—now ask your question at once."

"May I? O Xanthe, dear, dear Xanthe, will you have me or our cousin Leonax for your husband?"

"You, you, only you, and nobody else on earth!" cried the girl, throwing both arms around him. Phaon clasped her closely, and joyously kissed her brow and lips.

The sky, the sea, the sun, everything near or distant that was bright and beautiful, was mirrored in their hearts, and it seemed to both as if they heard all creatures that sing, laugh, and rejoice. Each thought that, in the other, he or she possessed the whole world with all its joy and happiness. They were united, wholly united, there was nothing except themselves, and thus they became to each other an especially blissful world, beside which every other created thing sank into nothingness.

Minute after minute passed, nearly an hour had elapsed, and, instead of making garlands, Xanthe clasped her arms around Phaon's neck; instead of gazing into the distant horizon, she looked into his eyes; instead of watching for approaching steps, both listened to the same sweet words which lovers always repeat, and yet never grow weary of speaking and hearing.

The roses lay on the ground, the ship from *Messina* ran into the bay beside the estate, and *Semestre* hobbled down to the sea to look for Xanthe, and in the place of the master of the house receive her favorite's son, who came as a suitor, like a god.

She repeatedly called the girl's name before reaching the marble bench, but always in vain.

When she had at last passed the myrtle-grove,

which had concealed the lovers from her eyes, she could not help beholding the unwelcome sight.

Xanthe was resting her head on Phaon's breast, while he bent down and kissed her eyes, her mouth, and at last—who ever did such things in her young days?—even her delicate little nose.

For several minutes Semestre's tongue seemed paralyzed, but at last she raised both arms, and a cry of mingled indignation and anguish escaped her lips.

Xanthe started up in terror, but Phaon remained sitting on the marble bench, held the young girl's hand in his own, and looked no more surprised than if some fruit had dropped from the tree beside him.

The youth's composure increased the old woman's fury, and her lips were just parting to utter a torrent of angry words, when Jason stepped as lightly as a boy between her and the betrothed lovers, cast a delighted glance at his favorites, and bowing with comic dignity to Semestre cried, laughing:

"The two will be husband and wife, my old friend, and ought to ask your blessing, unless you wickedly intend to violate a solemn vow."

"I will—I will! When did I—" shrieked the housekeeper.

"Didn't you," interrupted Jason, raising his voice—"didn't you vow this morning that you would prepare Phaon's wedding-feast with your own hands as soon as you yourself offered a sacrifice to the Cyprian goddess to induce her to unite their hearts?"

"And I'll stick to it, so surely as the gracious goddess—"

"I hold you to your promise!" exclaimed Jason. "Your sucking pig has just been offered to Aphrodite. The priest gladly accepted it and slaughtered it before my eyes, imploring with me the goddess to fill Xanthe's heart with love for Phaon."

The housekeeper clinched her hands, approached Jason, and so plainly showed her intention of attacking him that the steward, who had assailed many a wild-boar, retreated—by no means fearlessly.

She forced him back to the marble bench, screaming:

"So that's why the priest found no word of praise for my beautiful pig! You're a thief, a cheat! You took my dear little pig, which all the other gods might envy the mother of Eros, put in its place a wretched animal just like yourself, and falsely said it came from me. Oh, I see through the whole game! That fine Mopsus was your accomplice; but so true as I—"

"Mopsus has entered our service," replied Jason, laughing; "and, if our Phaon's bride will

permit, he wants to wed the dark-haired Dorippe. Henceforth our property is yours."

"And ours yours," replied Xanthe.—"Be good-natured, Semestre; I will marry no man but Phaon, and shall soon win my father over to our side, rely upon that."

The housekeeper was probably forced to believe these very resolute words, for, like a vanquished but skillful general, she began to think of covering her retreat, saying:

"I was outwitted; but, what I vowed in a moment of weakness, I have now sworn again. I am only sorry for your poor father, who needed a trustworthy son, and the good Leonax—"

At this moment, as if he had heard his name and obediently appeared at her call, the son of Alciphron, of Messina, appeared with Phaon's father, Protarch, from the shadow of the myrtle-grove.

He was a gay, handsome youth, richly and carefully dressed. After many a pressure of the hand and cordial words of welcome, Phaon took the young girl's hand and led her to the newcomers, saying:

"Give me Xanthe for a wife, my father. We have grown up together like the ivy and wild vine on the wall, and can not part."

"No, certainly not," added Xanthe, blushing and nestling closely to her lover's side, as she gazed beseechingly first at her uncle, and then at the young visitor from Messina.

"Children, children!" cried Protarch, "you spoil my best plans. I had destined Agariste, the rich Mentor's only child, for you, foolish boy, and already had come to terms with the old miser. But who can say I *will*, or this and that shall happen to-morrow?—You are very sweet and charming, my girl, and I don't say that I shouldn't be glad, but—mighty Zeus! what will my brother Alciphron say—and you, Leonax?"

"I?" asked the young man, smiling. "I came here like a dutiful son, but I confess I rejoice over what has happened, for now my parents will hardly say 'No' a second time, when I beg them to give me Codrus's daughter, Ismene, for my wife."

"And there stands a maiden who seems to like to hear such uncivil words better than Helen loved Paris's flattering speeches!" exclaimed Phaon's father, first kissing his future daughter's cheek and then his son's forehead.

"But now let us go to father," pleaded Xanthe.

"Only one moment," replied Protarch, "to look after the boxes the people are bringing.—Take care of the large chest with the Phœnician dishes and matron's robes, my lads."

During the first moments of the welcome, Semestre had approached her darling's son, told

him who she was, received his father's messages of remembrance, kissed his hand, and stroked his arm.

His declaration that he wished another maiden than Xanthe for his wife soothed her not a little, and when she now heard of matrons' dresses, and not merely *one* robe, her eyes sparkled joyously, and, fixing them on the ground, she asked:

"Is there a blue one among them? I'm particularly fond of blue."

"I've selected a blue one too," replied Protarch. "I'll explain for what purpose up yonder. Now we'll go and greet my brother."

Xanthe, hand in hand with her lover, hurried on in advance of the procession, lovingly prepared her father for what had happened, told him how much injustice he, old Semestre, and herself had done poor Phaon, led the youth to him, and, deeply agitated, sank on her knees before him as he laid her hand in her playfellow's, exclaiming in a trembling voice:

"I have always loved you, curly-head, and Xanthe wants you for her husband. Then I, too, should have a son!—Hear, lofty Olympians, a good, strong, noble son! Help me up, my boy. How well I feel! Haven't I gained in you two stout legs and arms? Only let the old woman come to me to-day! The conjurer taught me how to meet her."

Leaning on Phaon's strong shoulder he joyously went out of the house, greeted his handsome young nephew as well as his brother, and said:

"Let Phaon live with Xanthe in my house, which will soon be his own, for I am feeble and need help."

"With all my heart," cried Protarch, "and it will be well on every account, for, for—well, it must come out, for I, foolish graybeard—"

"Well?" asked Lysander, and Semestre curved her hand into a shell and held it to her ear to hear better.

"I—just look at me—I, Protarch, Dionysius's son, can no longer bear to stay in the house all alone with that silent youth and old Jason, and so I have—perhaps it is a folly, but certainly no crime—so I have chosen a new wife in Messina."

"Protarch!" cried Lysander, raising his hands

in astonishment; but Phaon nodded to his father approvingly, exchanging a joyous glance with Xanthe.

"He has chosen my mother's younger sister," said Leonax.

"The younger, yes, but not the youngest," interrupted Protarch. "You must have your wedding in three days, children. Phaon will live here in your house, Lysander, with his Xanthe, and I in the old one yonder with my Praxilla. Directly after your marriage I shall go back to Messina with Leonax and bring home my wife."

"We have long needed a mistress in the house, and I bless your bold resolution!" exclaimed Jason.

"Yes, you were always brave," said the invalid.

"But not so very courageous this time as it might seem," answered Protarch, smiling. "Praxilla is an estimable widow, and it was for her I purchased in Messina the matron's robes for which you asked, Semestre."

"For her?" murmured the old woman.

"There is a blue one among them too, which will be becoming, for she has light brown hair very slightly mixed with gray. But she is cheerful, active, and clever, and will aid Phaon and Xanthe in their young housekeeping with many a piece of good advice."

"I shall go to my daughter in Agrigentum," said Semestre, positively.

"Go," replied Lysander, kindly, "and enjoy yourself in your old age on the money you have saved."

"Which my father," added Leonax, "will increase by the sum of a thousand drachmas."

"My Alciphron has a heart!" cried the housekeeper.

"You shall receive from me, on the day of your departure, the same sum and a blue matron's robe," said Lysander."

Shortly after the marriage of Xanthe and Phaon, Semestre went to live with her daughter.

The marble seat, on which the young people's fate was decided, was called by the grandchildren of the wedded pair, who lived to old age in love and harmony, "the bench of the question."

*Ueber Land und Meer.*



## ON SOME OF SHAKESPEARE'S FEMALE CHARACTERS:

BY ONE WHO HAS PERSONATED THEM.

## III.—DESDEMONA.

BRYNTYSILIO, NEAR LLANGOLLEN, NORTH WALES,  
September 10, 1880.

"My fair warrior." "Oh, she was heavenly true!"

YES, my dear friend, I will try to gratify your wish, that I should put before you in words the Desdemona that was in my heart and mind in the days when I was first called to embody her upon the stage. It was among my earliest efforts, and I was then a very young girl; but she had been long for me a creature into whose life I had entered with a passionate sympathy, which I can not even now recall without emotion. In the gallery of heroes and heroines which my young imagination had fitted up for my daily and nightly reveries, Desdemona filled a prominent place. How could it be otherwise? A being so bright, so pure, so unselfish, generous, courageous—so devoted in her love, so unconquerable in her faith to her "kind lord," even while dying by his hand; and all this beauty of body and mind blasted by the machinations of a soulless villain, who "out of her own goodness" made the net that enmeshed her too credulous husband, and her absolutely guileless self!

The manner, too, of her death increased her hold upon my imagination. Owing, I suppose, to delicate health and the weak action of my heart, the fear of being smothered haunted me continually. The very thought of being in a crowd, of any pressure near me, would fill me with terror. I would give up any delight rather than face it. Thus it was that, because of this favorite terror of my own, the manner of Desdemona's death had a fearful significance for me. That she should, in the midst of this frightful death-agony, be able not only to forgive her torturer, but to keep her love for him unchanged, was a height of nobleness surpassing that of all the knights and heroes I had ever read of. Hers, too, was "the pang without the palm." Juliet, Cordelia, Imogen, Hermione, sufferers as they were, had no such suffering as this. For hers was the supreme anguish of dying, while the one in whose regard she desired to stand highest believed her tainted and impure! To a loving, noble woman, what fate could be more terrible than this?

Of course, I did not know in those days that

Desdemona is usually considered a merely amiable, simple, yielding creature, and is also generally so represented on the stage. This is the last idea that would have entered my mind. To me she was in all things worthy to be a hero's bride, and deserving the highest love, reverence, and gratitude from the noble Moor. "Gentle" she was, no doubt (the strong are naturally gentle)—and Othello in one place calls her so. But he uses the epithet in the Italian and old English sense, implying that union of nobility of person and of disposition which speaks in an unconscious grace of movement and of outward look. This was what I imagine was in Wordsworth's mind when speaking of "the gentle lady married to the Moor"; and, when he discoursed on that favorite theme on which, he says, "right voluble I am," I can fancy that he drew his heroine in much the same lines as those in which she presented herself to my young imagination. I can not think he would have singled her out in his famous sonnet as he does, had he not thought her as brave as she was generous, as high of heart as she was sweet of nature, or had he regarded her as a soft, insipid, plastic creature, ready to do any one's bidding, and take placidly any ill-usage from mere weakness and general characterless docility. Oh, no! Such creatures do not win the love of the purest and noblest, and the attachment and admiration of all.

It was well for me that I never saw Desdemona, or indeed any of Shakespeare's heroines, on the stage, before I had to impersonate them myself. I was thus hampered by no traditions, and my ideals were not interfered with by recollections of what others had done. I struggled, as best I could, to give expression to the characters, as I had thought them out for myself, looking only at the text, and ignoring all commentators and critics, for they perplexed but did not help me. Crude and imperfect as my conceptions were—and no one found this out sooner than myself, as time and experience widened them—yet they seemed to make themselves felt by my audiences, who, to my surprise and delight, were always most kind and indulgent to me.

Very often I meet people now who tell me they saw my first performances, and speak of them as though they were great things. (You ask me to talk of myself, so you see I do.) They were better satisfied than I was, because I knew

that I could do far better with encouragement and practice.

But ah, how my heart ached when the critics flung great names at me! A Siddons, an O'Neill—what could I know of them? How they thought about my heroines—for they were mine, a part of me—I could not tell. Did they look at them with the same eyes, think the same thoughts about them, as I did? No one could tell me that. I was only told with what grand effect one spoke certain lines, how another looked and sobbed and fainted in a certain situation. Fortunately for me, the critics then, as now, did not all agree. I was not allowed to see newspapers; but somehow unkind criticisms are sure to find their way through one channel or another, and to make their bark felt. A critic, to do good, and give a lesson worth learning, should find out first what is good—for no work worth speaking of at all can be without some good—and then the faults can be told and listened to in a proper and patient spirit.

Happily, however, I found not a few who did not daunt me with tales of my predecessors, but encouraged me to persevere in my own course, to trust to my own conceptions, and to believe that these would work out a more adequate expression as I gained a greater mastery of my art. Among such, my Desdemona was peculiarly welcomed as rescuing the character, as I was told, out of the commonplace, and lifting her into her true position in the tragedy. This view was especially pressed upon me by Mr. Elton, the gentleman who acted Brabantio—an excellent actor in Mr. Macready's picked company, who, alas! was drowned in a shipwreck a year or two later. He told me that my Desdemona was a new creation for him; that, to use his own phrase—and I remember it well—it restored the balance of the play by giving her character its due weight in the action, and thus for the first time was the *chiaro-oscuro* of the tragedy, as he said, seen by him. Words no less encouraging fell from Mr. Macready, my Othello. He told me my brightness and gayety in the happy early scenes at Cyprus helped him greatly, and that, when sadder, I was not lachrymose; and, above all, that I added intensity to the last act by "being so difficult to kill." Indeed, I felt that last scene as if it were a very struggle for my own life. I would not die with my honor tarnished, without the chance of disabusing my husband's mind of the vile thoughts that tore it. I felt for *him* as well as for myself, for I knew what remorse and misery would overwhelm him when he should come to know how cruelly he had wronged me; and therefore I threw into my remonstrance all the powers of passionate appeal that I could command.

I recall with gratitude the comfort and instruction for which I was indebted to my good friend Brabantio—my "cruel father," as I used to call him. He was the kindest and gentlest of men; thoroughly well read, of fine tastes, and an accomplished rather than a powerful actor. It seems but yesterday that I sat by his side in the green-room at the reading of Robert Browning's beautiful drama, "The Blot in the Scutcheon." As a rule, Mr. Macready always read the new plays. But, owing, I suppose, to some press of business, the task was intrusted on this occasion to the head prompter—a clever man in his way, but wholly unfitted to bring out, or even to understand, Mr. Browning's meaning. Consequently, the delicate, subtle lines were twisted, perverted, and sometimes even made ridiculous in his hands. My "cruel father" was a warm admirer of the poet. He sat writhing and indignant, and tried by gentle asides to make me see the real meaning of the verse. But somehow the mischief proved irreparable, for a few of the actors during the rehearsals chose to continue to misunderstand the text, and never took the interest in the play which they must have done had Mr. Macready read it—for he had great power as a reader. I always thought it was chiefly because of this *contretemps* that a play, so thoroughly dramatic, failed, despite its painful story, to make the great success which was justly its due.

Kind Mr. Elton! In those cold, cheerless, wintry days, his salutation was always the same: "Well, how does Spring Morning?" And, if my eyes and heart were heavy from having heard my faults too harshly censured, he would say—noticing, I suppose, my depressed manner—"So April showers have been falling!" When I asked him to watch and check my faults, he positively refused, saying: "I heard already too much of them. I must remember I was passing through my novitiate—not, like most others, before a provincial, but before a London audience, and that I must expect to have much to learn. But if I kept always thinking of myself and my shortcomings, I should spoil my style, the charm of which was my self-forgetfulness and power of identifying myself with the character I was acting. How was I to be a real Juliet or Desdemona if I had my defects uppermost in my mind? I must trust to their falling away from me by practice in my art." He was the more tender, I can now see, partly in consequence of my extreme sensitiveness and my dissatisfaction with my own efforts, and partly from seeing too strong a disposition in Mr. Macready to take exception to everything I did which was not exactly in accordance with his own notions. "My dear, you are entirely wrong in this conception," was a phrase constantly in his mouth. The young

girl was expected to take the same view as the ripe artist, who had had great experience, no doubt, but who had also confirmed habits, and whose strong masculine mind had in it but little of the feminine element. I believed in him, and could not act by his side without being moved and influenced by his intense earnestness and power. I tried hard to do what he advised—too much so; for, perhaps you remember, I was accused of having caught his manner and expression. It was almost impossible to do otherwise, considering the many hours one had to pass under his direction. Rehearsals began at ten in the morning, and usually went on until three or four. In the revival of an old, or the bringing out of a new play, these rehearsals were continued daily for three weeks at least, sometimes four or five.

Still, unflinching disciplinarian as he was, Mr. Macready was not always stern. He could joke and had "pretty things to say" upon occasion. I always did my best to be punctual; but I had to drive three miles to the theatre—a distance which, if I had acted the previous night, I found rather trying in the early winter mornings. I remember well one morning when I was a little late, I found that I had been already "called" for the stage. On reaching it, I made my apologies, but said that if they looked at the time they would find I was but ten minutes after the hour, and I understood that ten minutes' grace was always given. "Ah," said Mr. Macready, turning gravely to me, "not to you! We all agree that you do not require it: you have enough already." In the general laugh I was, of course, forgiven. Then with all his sternness, how tender-hearted he was when illness was present! All knew that, for the great exertion of the lungs in this my first girlhood, Nature revenged herself by inflicting on me a cough which harassed and distressed me night and day. Often, often has Mr. Macready said to me: "My poor child, your cough goes to my heart. How I wish I could spare you!" And when at last, after my third winter, I had to give up and go to a milder climate for a year, he never omitted writing to me every week, advising me what books to read, and encouraging and expecting me to write and give him my criticisms upon them; sending me news of the theatre; and, best of all, bidding me get well soon, as I was greatly asked for and missed, and he could not revive or bring forward certain plays without my help. This was my only drop of comfort; for, despite the love and care of a dear friend who left her home to tend and watch over me, it was a weary time this banishment—this separation from the art which was all in all to me; for from it I had derived almost my only happiness in a hitherto

lonely, little-cared-for life. I could not but see, too, that my friends did not expect I should grow better. I do not think I very much cared. By the very young I believe life is not highly prized. But oh, the inaction, the enforced care and thought for myself, the wearing cough by night, the sameness of the dreary days! Had my life not been just before so different, so full of work, of imaginative excitement, doubtless my spirits would not have sunk so low. But happily, the dreary winter and trying spring gave way at last to summer: summer and youth triumphed over my illness, and before another winter I was well again.

I have wandered far from my text. "Old memories, they cling, they cling!" But as my thoughts travel back to these well-remembered days, and the

"Manche liebe Schatten steigen auf,"

of which Goethe speaks, my pen runs on with a freedom which I feel sure your friendship will forgive. You see, with encouragement, how conceited and "self-imbued" I can become.

Now let me go back to Desdemona, as I dreamed of her in those days, and as I think of her still. As in the case of Ophelia and Portia, so her mother has obviously been long dead before Shakespeare takes up the story. Desdemona only once alludes to her mother, and that is in her hour of deepest bewilderment and sorrow; then she simply says, "My mother had a maid called Barbara," whose lover had "proved mad, and did forsake her." Like Portia, she was a noble Venetian lady, but there was a whole world of difference between their homes and their bringing up. No proud indulgent father watched the training of Desdemona's youth, and studied the progress of her heart and mind. Absorbed in state affairs, he seems to have been at no pains to read his daughter's nature, to engage her affections or her confidence. Thus, a creature, loving, generous, imaginative, was thrown back upon herself, and left to dream over characters more noble, and lives more checkered with adventure, than those she was in the habit of seeing in her father's luxurious home. Making so small a part of her father's life, and missing the love, or the display of it, which would have been so precious to her, she finds her happiness in dreams of worth more exalted than any she has seen, but which she has heard and read of in the poets and romancers of her own and other times. Supreme mistress of her father's house, she receives his guests, dispenses his hospitalities; and, except that she has never felt the assurance of that father's love, she yet "hath felt no age nor known no sorrow," and is "a child to chiding."

Her father finds her obedient to his every wish, a most diligent mistress of his house affairs—"a maiden never bold"; of "spirit still and quiet." He never thinks of the depths that may lie under this unruffled surface—not only hidden from his sight, but unknown to his child herself. He has found her "opposite to marriage" with the "curled darlings" of Venice, who had solicited her. As these have never moved her quiet, her love for what he imagines she feared to look on is, to his thinking, "against all rules of nature," and could only be brought about "by spells and medicines bought of mountebanks." The enchantment, the witchcraft with which love fills the heart, Brabantio has never felt or believed in. All must be magic which is not customary.

Shakespeare carefully shows, in Desdemona's address to the senate, how matters stood between her father and herself. "Do you know in all this noble company," he asks her, "where most you owe obedience?" Obedience, observe, not affection. And what is her reply? Not that of a shrinking, timid girl, but that of a thoughtful woman; one whose mind and heart went with her love, whose courage is as great and as high as she thinks the object of it worthy—ready to meet the consequences, and, above all, to transfer to her own shoulders from Othello's the blame of her abduction:

"That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world; . . .

And to his honors, and his valiant parts,  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate."

Of her father she says he "is the lord of duty." To him she is bound for "life and education"; these teach her "how to respect him." Just as he has not asked, so not a word does she say about love and affection toward him. He is silenced. She owns freely all she owes him for "life and education." Up to the time of her marriage he is first; she owes and pays him all obedience, all respect:

" . . . But here's my husband;  
And so much duty as my mother showed  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor, my lord."

From all we see of Desdemona's readiness to give more than is expected from her of love and service, even to those who had much slighter claims upon her, I can not think she would have been wanting in these to her father, had he not chilled her girlhood's natural demonstrations of affection. There is a kind of proud frowardness in some natures which, even while loving dearly,

will yet hold aloof from, keep at a distance, the objects of their love. They claim as a right that which will not grow without some care and fostering, some responsive look, some tender words.

It is hardly conceivable that Brabantio should not have been proud of this daughter, of whose beauty and fascination he must have heard all tongues speak in praise. What pains has not Shakespeare taken to tell us over and over again what this gracious creature was! As she moved among her father's guests in his palace halls, or flashed in her gondola along the canals of Venice, what admiring eyes must have followed her! Of her serene grace and womanly gentleness Brabantio's words have informed us. Cassio, the gentleman and scholar of high blood and breeding, speaks of her as

" . . . a maid  
That paragons description and wild fame."

When she lands in Cyprus it is

"The riches of the ship is come on shore."

High as Othello stands in his regard, yet she is above even him in excellence. She is "our great captain's captain." Though dead to belief in all human excellence, even Iago is not blind either to her virtues or her beauty. Although to Roderigo he calls her "a super-subtile Venetian," yet to Cassio he says, "She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than is requested." But if she is such as this to the general eye, what is she to Othello's? To him she is "the cunning'st pattern of excelling nature. . . . The world hath not a sweeter creature." And then her sweet, womanly graces! "So delicate with her needle: an admirable musician: Oh, she will sing the savageness out of a bear; of so high and plenteous wit and invention! And then of so gentle a condition!" She is pictured to us, in short, as possessed of every quality which could lay hold of a hero's heart, and bring joy into his home:

"If Heaven could make me such another world  
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,  
I'd not have sold her for it!"

What imagination would not kindle at the images thus set before it! Who would be content to see in this exquisite woman, as so many do, only a pretty piece of yielding amiability!

As with Imogen, so with Desdemona, Shakespeare has, in the passages cited, and in many others throughout the play, taken infinite pains to show how these his favorite heroines excelled in every accomplishment—how the grace, the purity, the dignity of their minds gave added charm to the fascination of their beauty and



their manners. And this woman, this "divine Desdemona," whose mind has been fed, as in those stirring times of war it was sure to be, with "tales of high emprise and chivalry," and whose heart is ready for the inspiring touch which was to kindle it—is placed by her father under the influence which was above all others likely to captivate her fancy—that of the great general, of Moorish but royal blood, whose name was in every mouth, on whose valor and generalship the state had leaned, and was leaning still, as its chief stay. Long before she saw Othello, Desdemona must have pictured to herself this remarkable man, about whose almost fabulous history the world's talk had been so loud, and whose valorous deeds were in every mouth. How dull must Brabantio have been, when he so oft invited the great hero of the day to his house! If he found pleasure in "questioning" the story of Othello's life, why did he not cast a thought upon the still greater charm that story might have for his daughter's ear? Dull and blind indeed must the old man have been, not to see that the blunt soldier tells it "o'er and o'er" because of the sweet listener at his side; not to see how quickly, when called away by house affairs, she steals back, sinking quietly into her seat so as not to interrupt the tale. The tremor in Desdemona's manner, which her father mistook for fear, had quite another origin. She felt frightened, not at Othello, but at herself—at the novel, bewildering, absorbing feeling that, hour by hour, was overmastering her.

The rapt attention—the eager, tender eyes—often suffused with tears—when Othello spoke of "being taken by the insolent foe, and sold to slavery"—the parted lips and shortened breath—if these were noted by Brabantio, it would seem that he thought of them as of no more moment than if his daughter had been listening to some skilled *improvisatore*. That her being could be moved, her heart touched, by this stranger to her race and country—

"The extravagant and wheeling stranger  
Of here and everywhere."

as Roderigo calls him, whose complexion was like "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun"—had never crossed his mind. He would as soon have thought of her being attracted by her torch-bearer or her gondolier, as by one whom he classes with "bond slaves and pagans."

This wide difference of feeling could not have existed between father and child had there been any living sympathy between them. He would have foreseen the danger of exposing a girl dawning into womanhood, and of sensibilities so deep, to such an unusual fascination, and she would have turned to him when she found her-

self in danger of being overmastered by a feeling, the indulgence in which might wreck his peace or her own. But the father, who is only the "lord of duty," has established no claim upon her heart; and that heart, hitherto untouched, is stolen from her during these long interviews, insensibly but for ever.

We are not to think that all this happens suddenly. The father is not surprised into losing his child. If he has been deceived it is by himself, and not by her. Othello speaks of having "some nine moons wasted" away from the tented field. Many of these may have been passed in Venice. Much time, therefore, may have flitted happily away in these interrupted recitals, before Othello found "good means to draw" from Desdemona

"... a prayer of earnest heart  
That he would all his pilgrimage dilate,  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
But not intently."

When the story has been told from first to last, she gives him "for his pains a world of sighs."

"'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful;  
She wished she had not heard it. Yet she wished  
That Heaven had made her such a man,"

so noble, so self-devoting, so grandly-enduring—so altogether spotless and heroic. Here comes out the warrior spirit which I have ascribed to her—the power of kindling, of understanding and rising up to, heroic deeds. We feel, even apart from Othello's words and her own subsequent avowal, that "her heart's subdued even to the very quality" of her lord. Thenceforth she is his own, in war or peace, in life and death, for evermore. The accident of the difference in Othello's complexion, which operates against him in other eyes, endears him to hers. It touches her generosity. "I saw Othello's visage in his mind," and "to his honors and his valiant parts" she consecrates her soul and fortunes from that moment.

Thus, under his very eyes, was Brabantio's daughter wooed and won; for he does not venture to gainsay this, after Othello has delivered his "round unvarnished tale" to the Venetian Council. But his very blindness—indifference it could not be—must have shown the lovers the impossibility of gaining his consent to their union.

Therefore did the "maiden never bold" take courage to leave her father's home, and give herself in marriage to the Moor. She had also the true, quiet courage, when sent for to the senate-house, to appeal directly to the Duke, begging him to hear her story, and to let her find a "char-



ter in his voice to assist her simpleness." When her "unfolding" is ended, there is but one feeling in the council—to "let her will have free way." The Duke, in bidding "good-night to every one," adds to Brabantio:

" . . . And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black."

The first senator says: "Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well." Then does Brabantio let out the cold malignity of his natural disposition—the unforgiving cruelty which he keeps to the last, so that it may sting and wound more surely:

"Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see;  
She has deceived her father, and may thee."

Othello responds, "My life upon her faith!"

How vain, how futile are his words! Desdemona never forgot them. But how was it with Othello? Although at the time cast aside, defied, yet they struck home as they were intended; and with such a listener as Iago, intent, as we know beforehand, on revenge, and caring not by what means he brings it about, Brabantio puts the weapon into his hands, which, adroitly wielded by this subtle fiend, leads on to the fearful climax—"the tragic loading" of Desdemona's bed! These fatal words open up to him the whole devilish scheme on which the play turns, and he closes the scene saying:

"I have it; 'tis engendered. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's  
light!"

Well might Othello say, "My life upon her faith!" How valiantly has she—his few hours' wife—stood by him before these haughty senators and her much-dreaded father! how surprised him with delight, begging, this delicately nurtured lady, to be allowed to share with him the hardships and perils of the impending campaign—to live with him in the "tented field!" Had she been one who loved her ease and pleasure, such a one as Iago chooses to describe Venetian women in general to have been, was she likely to make such a request? Who can not see that this woman was of the true heroic mold, fearless as she was gentle? At the time her request appears to have gone to Othello's heart—to have moved him to endless gratitude, as well it might. When they meet at Cyprus, the first words on his lips are, "Oh, my fair warrior!" The phrase, doubtless, afterward became a favorite one with them; and it is touching to find Desdemona using it after Othello's to her incomprehensible frenzy concerning the handkerchief, when she rebukes herself for her momentary harsh thought of him:

" . . . Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
But now I find I had suborned the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely."

"My life upon her faith!" Yes, whatever these words were for Othello, they were ever dear to her, believing, as she does almost to the last, that her noble Moor's love and trust were as absolute as her own. In this her very innocence, in her loyalty to her husband, and to his friend Michael Cassio, Iago finds the easy means to accomplish his fiendish purpose.

It is the highest tribute to Desdemona that she alone is unbeguiled by Iago's subtlety. Othello, Roderigo, Cassio, Emilia, he plays upon them all—uses them, gets them within his fatal grasp—makes of them his tools or his dupes—leads them on blindly to their own undoing. Not so Desdemona.

" . . . Oh, she was innocent!  
And to be innocent is nature's wisdom!  
Oh, surer than suspicion's hundred eyes  
Is that fine sense, which to the pure in heart,  
By mere oppugnancy of their own goodness,  
Reveals the approach of evil!"

Iago, conscious of this, makes no attempt to deceive her. His victim she may be, but he feels she will never be his dupe. After the first meeting in Cyprus, he appears never to have come into contact with her, until she sends for him, to see if he can throw light upon the unaccountable change that has come over her husband. Had he dared to approach her with the faintest suggestion that Othello was untrue, she would have treated him as Nina Sforza, another noble Venetian lady, treated a similar traducer in Zouch Troughton's fine modern tragedy which bears her name:

" . . . My Doria false!  
Oh, I could strike thee, liar!"

Except to illustrate the truth that no man knows himself, I marvel why Shakespeare makes Othello speak of himself as "not easily jealous." It seems to me that the spark scarcely touches the tinder before it is aflame. A few words dropped by the tempter take hold of him even when his happiness is at the fullest; when he has just parted from Desdemona in a transport of content, which finds vent in the words—

"Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee! And when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again!"

Chaos *has* come! An artfully muttered "Indeed!"—a question about Cassio's previous acquaintance with his wife, and his suspicion is at once aroused. Othello insists upon knowing

Iago's "thinkings," on wringing from him the meanings of his "stops," gives admission to the idea that he may be wronged; and when Iago, by way of seeming warning, bids him beware of "jealousy," you see, from his agonized exclamation, "O misery!" that the word has sunk into the very depths of his being. All the love, all the devoted self-sacrifice of Desdemona, all sense of what is due to her and to himself, are forgotten. He suffers Iago to remind him of her father's parting words, and so to pour his envenomed slime upon this fair creature, to whom he owes so much, that her name and fame can never again in life show fair in his eyes:

"She's gone; I am abused, and my relief  
Must be to loathe her."

And thus, because of the foul words, the vile suggestion of this base Machiavellian trickster, the life of these two noble beings is turned from paradise to hell, and there is no more peace nor joy for either of them.

Othello is right, when he says of Iago that he

"Knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,  
Of human dealings."

But that he should think him "honest," this is the marvel. Nor less marvel is it that, knowing him to be but a "rough soldier," and, as Iago says of himself, by nature apt "to spy into abuses," and to "shape things that are not," he can allow him, even distantly, to approach the sanctuary of his wife's virtue. Men, as we know, may possess all manly gifts, and be as decorous and moral in their conduct as need be, yet, through some defect of nature or of training, or of both, may be quite incapable of conceiving the noblest qualities of womanhood. To understand these, there must be some sympathy, some affinity. Therefore Iago might be in a sense "honest," yet totally unfit to speak or be listened to on such a subject. Had Othello been really the "noble Moor," as "true of mind" as Desdemona thought him, he would, at the lightest aspersion of his wife, have recoiled from Iago as from a serpent. He would have crushed the insolent traducer and his vile suggestions beneath his heel in bitterest contempt.

"Not easily jealous"! Of all men, Othello had cause not to be jealous. Capable as he had proved himself of admiring Desdemona's trustful, reverential love, of appreciating her graceful, playful fondness—new as it was to him, and touching, as it did, chords which had never vibrated during a life spent hitherto among men in the rough scenes of war, his senses fascinated by her beauty, as his mind was by the purity and sympathy of hers—how could he fall away from his allegiance so soon? Was such a woman as Desdemona likely to become untrue because he

had not a fair skin or silky manners? "She had eyes, and chose me!" Or why should he think he had been displaced in her affections by Cassio? Cassio was obviously an older friend of Desdemona than himself—a welcome visitor at Brabantio's house; for in their wooing he "went between them very oft." He makes no secret of his admiration of Desdemona; and we may be sure that, had she shown him the slightest favor, he would have been among her suitors. But no. All his advantages of person, of mind and manners, had given him no hold even upon her fancy. His best recommendation to her had been, that he was ever eloquent in Othello's praise:

"... What! Michael Cassio,

That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part!"

As if she had ever spoken of him dispraisingly—except, perhaps, for the pleasure of having her ears filled with his praises by one who "had known him long"! Yet not a thought of this crosses Othello's mind; and he leaps at once to the conclusion that both the tried friend and the wife who had sworn for his sake "country, credit, everything," were false to him. And this he does upon the mere suggestion of a villain whom he absurdly believes to be "of exceeding honesty." Truly had Iago gauged him when he said:

"The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;  
And will as tenderly be led by the nose  
As asses are!"

But Iago could neither see nor feel that his nature, free and open as it might be, lacked that true nobility which, being itself incapable of baseness, is resolutely closed to innuendoes against those it loves. Alas the while! But for this fatal defect, how could Othello have fallen so easy a prey to his malignant tempter—how could he have come so readily to believe that he had been discarded there, where, as he says, he had "garnered up his heart"—

"Where either I must live or have no life;  
The fountain from the which my current runs,  
Or else dries up?"

We feel with him when he exclaims, "Oh, the pity of it, the pity of it!" but we feel, too, that had he but possessed some of Desdemona's loyalty, some grains of common sense, all Iago's snares might have been set for him in vain.

For, after all, Iago, as I have said, seems to me but a poor trickster at the best. He acts from the basest motives, and works by artifices the shallowest as well as the most vile—artifices liable to be upset at any moment by the merest

casualty. He hates Othello mortally for having, as he thinks, unfairly kept him out of his lieutenantancy. If Othello erred in this, his injustice is paid for by a fearful penalty. Iago's jealousy of Othello with his wife is but one of those conscious sacrifices to what he himself calls the "divinity of hell," which he resorts to as juggles with his own conscience. He hates Cassio for the same cause, and for supplanting him in his office. He hates his wife, as such creatures hate the wives that have "outlived their liking." He is brutish in mind as, when he dare be, he is in manners, and he is as sordid as he is vindictive—using Roderigo, that "poor trash of Venice," as a sponge to squeeze ducats from. Above all, he hates Desdemona, because she is impervious to his arts. Cunning as he is, yet he is in hourly terror that the net he has woven to ensnare others may enmesh himself. One word of frank explanation between Othello and Desdemona, a whisper from Emilia that the handkerchief was given by herself to her husband, a hint from Roderigo to Desdemona of the lies with which Iago has fooled him, and all his fine-spun web would have fallen to pieces. He knows this well, and sees no way of escape but in the murder of his dupes. Roderigo and Cassio must be "removed," and the Moor goaded on to murder his wife. To murder her—and how? Othello would have made her death swift and easy by poison. But this is not torture enough to satisfy Iago. "Strangle her in her bed—even the bed she hath contaminated!" When we think of all that has gone before—when, with this suggestion still recent on his lips, we see him afterward by the side of Desdemona, summoned by her in her trouble, as her "good friend," we feel inclined to echo his own words: "There is no such man; it is impossible."

Iago has wit enough to see some of the good qualities of his victims, and, judging of other men by himself—for he knows no other standard—he acts with full reliance on the vices and the weaknesses of mankind. But he has not wit enough to see that he is playing a game in which he must lose in the end, for all the odds are against the chance of his victims being swept away so completely that his villainy can never come to light. I see no grandeur in a "demi-devil" of this type; and I think the judgment misplaced which can find it in his expressed determination to answer no questions, even upon the rack. He had already said too much in his garrulous boast of having tricked his victims by dropping Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's chamber. A cleverer villain would have held his peace. Woful indeed it is, that a creature so despicable should have power to hurt Othello's mind past curing, to drag it down into the very

mire—that he should have made him think base thoughts, and stain his soul so deeply that no years of penitential grief could wash it clean again. History has not on record such another inhuman villain. In my young dreams I never could quite decide into which of the circles of the Inferno he should be cast; even the worst seemed too good for him.

Is not my view of both Othello and Iago borne out by the brief, sad story, that rushes on so swiftly to its ghastly climax? We see little of the blissful life which Othello and Desdemona lived after their happy union as married lovers at Cyprus. After all his terrors for her safety, that he should find Desdemona safely landed there before him is a relief and a joy past all expressing. With a foreboding of evil he fears that—

" . . . Not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate."

Indeed, troubles begin early to press upon them. Cassio, their friend, endeared to them by the closest ties, so unaccountably forgets himself that his general has at once to strip him of his lieutenantancy. This must be a great sorrow to them both. Still, the rent is not irreparable; and we learn that Othello would have been glad of a fair excuse to reinstate his friend. When Desdemona first speaks for Cassio, we see that she knew Othello's mind. He pretends—but only pretends—to be absorbed in other matters, for the pleasure of hearing her plead as a petitioner. He puts her off only to hear her urge her suit again:

" . . . Good my lord,  
If I have any grace or power to move you,  
His present reconciliation take;  
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,  
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,  
I have no judgment in an honest face.

. . . Good love, call him back.

*Oth.* Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

*Des.* But shall't be shortly?

*Oth.* The sooner, sweet, for you.

*Des.* Shall't be to-night at supper?

*Oth.* No, not to-night.

*Des.* To-morrow dinner, then?

*Oth.* I shall not dine at home.

*Des.* Why, then, to-morrow night, or Tuesday morn;

Or Tuesday noon, or night, or Wednesday morn;  
I pray thee, name the time; but let it not  
Exceed three days; in faith he's penitent.

. . . I wonder in my soul

What you would ask of me I should deny,

Or stand soammering on. What! Michael  
Cassio,

That came a-wooing with you," etc.

When Othello sees that Desdemona is hurt at his silence, he breaks in with—

"Prithee, no more: let him come when he will:  
I will deny thee nothing."

But she thinks this so small a favor to be granted to a friend who had done so much for them, that she will hardly accept it as such. The "great captain's captain" will not have it called a "boon." 'Tis only so slight a service as she would "entreat him wear his gloves, or feed on nourishing dishes":

"... Nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,  
It shall be full of poise and difficulty,  
And fearful to be granted."

He repeats his former words:

"... I will deny thee nothing;  
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,  
To leave me but a little to myself."

How sweet is her rejoinder!—

"Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord."

He replies:

"Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to thee  
straight"—

which draws from her the winning assurance of her full faith in him:

"... Be as your fancies teach you;  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient."

And at this point ends the happiness, which is as perfect now as it well could be.

In the mean time, and while the adder's tongue is busy at its work, arrive the leading personages in Cyprus invited by Othello to a banquet. Desdemona receives them, and plays the part of gracious hostess, so natural to her. To her surprise Othello, who said he would "come to her straight," does not appear. She fears his guests will think him discourteous in this prolonged absence, and hastens herself to remind him of their visitors. She enters gayly, ready with a pretty chiding:

"How now, my dear Othello?  
Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
By you invited, do attend your presence.  
*Oth.* I am to blame."

The coldness and reserve of his speech startle her:

"Why do you speak so faint? Are you not well?  
*Oth.* I have a pain upon my forehead here.  
*Des.* Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away  
again:  
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
It will be well.  
*Oth.* Your napkin is too little;  
Let it alone."

The anger and abruptness shown in this reply to her offer to relieve his pain must have come indeed as a shock to Desdemona, contrasting strangely as it did with the tone of their last parting so short a time before. Yet she sweetly adds, without noticing his rudeness:

"I am very sorry that you are not well."

No wonder, finding things so changed, and with no apparent cause, that she forgets the handkerchief, dear as it was to her, with which she had offered to bind his forehead. She is "a child to chiding," and no doubt feels these first harsh words very keenly. They go out together, and we may suppose that her frank, innocent demeanor and fond words reassure him for the time. I remember so well Mr. Macready's manner as we left the scene. He took my face in both his hands, looked long into my eyes, and then the old look came into his, and it spoke as plainly as possible, "My life upon her faith!"

What happens at the banquet we can not tell. It can not be the presence of Cassio which inflames Othello, for, being in disgrace, he would hardly be there. It may be that the free, loyal homage which he sees paid to his wife, not only because of her position as his wife, but still more on account of her beauty and sweet courtesy to his guests, makes her still more precious in his eyes, so that the bare thought of not standing alone in her affections maddens him. But certainly he returns shortly after in a paroxysm of rage and grief, and salutes Iago with "Avaunt! begone! thou hast set me on the rack." Then follows that exquisite speech in which he bids farewell to everything in life most dear—to "the tranquil mind!"—to "content!"—to all "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."

"Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!"

To direct the fury of Othello's "waked wrath" into the desired channel, Iago has ready a whole catalogue of reasons to prove Desdemona and Cassio's disloyalty. Othello accepts them readily, as though they were "proofs of Holy Writ":

"Now I do see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;  
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.  
'Tis gone. . . . Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!"

These "aspics' tongues" have been hissing out their venom to deadly purpose. These are the drugs which Iago uses, and to which he again appeals:

"Work on—  
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught."

Desdemona has made so sure of winning Othello's consent to receive Cassio into favor



again, that she sends for him to tell him the good news: "Tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well." But before they meet occurs the scene with the handkerchief, and Othello's violence at the supposed loss of it. Still Desdemona, who knows nothing of its whereabouts, believing it to be only mislaid, and hoping to have it to show him when it has been properly searched for, thinks his vehemence on the subject a little overstrained—put upon her, indeed, "as a trick to drive her from her suit." Therefore she still repeats it, urging Cassio's claims upon him with the words:

"You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

A man that, all his time,  
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love;  
Shared dangers with you—"

It is only when Othello breaks angrily from her that she realizes there may be "some wonder in this handkerchief; I am most unhappy in the loss of it."

Emilia, instead of being, as her husband fancies, inclined favorably toward Othello, appears to me to have the dislike, common to her class, of anything unusual, and looks all along upon the Moor with unfriendly, suspicious eyes.

"'Tis not a year or two shows us a man."

She no doubt had found it to be so: even Iago might have appeared to her in different colors when they were first wedded. Her pent-up dislike to the Moor adds fuel to her wrath, when she finds subsequently that he has been the easy dupe of her villainous husband.

After the episode of the handkerchief, when Cassio appears, who had been sent for by Desdemona to hear, as she hoped, good news, Desdemona, ever unselfish, is as sorry for him as for herself:

"... Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!

My advocacy is not now in tune;  
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him  
Were he in favor as in humor altered."

She remembers that she has pledged herself to be his "solicitor" even to the death:

"... You must awhile be patient:  
What I can do I will; and more I will  
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you."

Cassio will surely think of this hereafter!

The next time we see Desdemona she comes with Lodovico, who has been sent to Cyprus from Venice, bearing to Othello the Duke's letters and commands. Desdemona salutes Lodovico as "cousin." He may be so, or this may be only a phrase of courtesy in the way that royalty uses it. When speaking of him afterward to

Emilia, she says, "This Lodovico is a proper man." "A very handsome man," says Emilia. Desdemona replies, "He speaks well." See the difference in the women—how finely marked in these comments! While Othello reads his papers, Lodovico inquires after his friend, Lieutenant Cassio. Upon this Desdemona, who never loses sight of her promise, says: "Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord an unkind breach"; and, beginning to fear that her own influence will not be sufficient, she adds, "But you shall make all well." "Is there division," Lodovico says, with evident surprise, "between my lord and Cassio?"

"A most unhappy one: I would do much  
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio."

This public declaration of her good-will—which appears, what in truth it is, nothing to those around but simply the natural feeling for a friend in trouble—all but maddens Othello; and when Desdemona expresses her gladness that they are commanded home, and that Cassio is to be governor of Cyprus in his place, Othello breaks out, "I am glad to see you *mad*," AND STRIKES HER. All must think *him* mad:

"My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,  
Though I should swear I saw't: 'tis very much:  
Make her amends; she weeps."

Her tears, Othello says, are but those of a crocodile. To his fiercer injunction, "Out of my sight!" her only answer is, "I will not stay to offend you." Then she is called back, and comes upon the instant, true to her former words—"Whate'er you be, I am obedient." Untouched by her gentleness, Othello continues:

"... Proceed you in your tears:  
Concerning this, sir—O well-painted passion!—  
... Get you away;  
I'll send for you anon. . . . Hence—avaunt!"

No wonder that Lodovico, when Othello quits the scene, exclaims in amazement:

"Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate  
Call all-in-all sufficient? This the nature  
Whom passion could not shake? . . .  
Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?  
What! strike his wife!"

Iago prepares Lodovico for what he knows is to follow, by replying: "Would I knew that stroke would prove the worst!" "I am sorry that I have been deceived in him," is Lodovico's answer. He will remember afterward that he has been deceived in more than in Othello.

Next come the Moor's interrogations of Emilia, and her replies:



"I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
Lay down my soul at stake: . . .  
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true,  
There's no man happy."

But she may as well speak to the winds. If Othello had spoken here of having seen the handkerchief in Cassio's hand, I believe, despite the terror of her husband, Emilia would have explained how she had herself found and given it to Iago; but he does not. He sends her to fetch Desdemona, and then rudely dismisses her.

The poor dove is now in the falcon's grasp, but not quite yet to be torn to pieces. One wonders why Othello sends for her, for he will believe nothing she says or swears:

"Oth. Swear thou art honest.  
Des. Heaven doth truly know it.  
Oth. Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell!  
Des. To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?  
Oth. . . . What committed!  
I should make very forges of my cheeks,  
That would to cinders burn up modesty,  
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!

Des. By Heaven, you do me wrong!"

When in the coarsest terms he asks her if she is not unfaithful, she exclaims: "No, as I am a Christian; no, as I shall be saved!"

Emilia finds her on the floor, to which she has sunk after making oath, on her knees, of her being to Othello "a true and loyal wife." Think how stunned and bewildered she must be! She is accused of a crime beyond all others most foreign to her nature. She can imagine no motive for the accusation—has no clew to the "With whom? How am I false?" It is like a hideous dream; and, with a pathos unsurpassed, to my thinking, in poetry, she answers Emilia's "How do you, my good lady?" with—

"Faith half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

Des. Who is thy lord?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia; I can not weep. . . .

. . . Prithee to-night

Lay on my bed my wedding-sheets—remember;  
And call thy husband hither."

Then follows that most pathetic scene, in which she so touchingly appeals for help to her destroyer, and asks, "Am I that name, Iago?" "What name, fair lady?" Not being able to utter the foul word herself, she answers:

"Such as, she says, my lord did say I was.

O good Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again?  
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him."

She fears that in his anger he may shake her off "to beggarly divorcement." Yet as she ever did, so she ever will, "love him dearly,"

" . . . Unkindness may do much;  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love."

She has to put up with the cold comfort which Iago gives—pretending to know nothing:

"I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humor:  
The business of the state does him offense,  
And he does chide with you."

At this she catches with trembling eagerness:

"If 'twere no other—  
Iago. It is but so, I warrant.

Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well."

How sad it is that the exigencies of our stage require the omission of the exquisite scene which follows (Act iv, sc. 3) in the anteroom to Desdemona's chamber—a scene so important for the development of her character, and affording such fine opportunity for the highest powers of pathos in the actress!\* Othello, says Emilia, "looks gentler"; but he has commanded her to be dismissed. "Dismiss me!" "So he says." "I would you had never seen him!" "So would not I," Desdemona rejoins:

\* I never saw this scene acted but once, and that was in Dresden. Certainly the Germans prove their high admiration and respect for our great poet. They give his plays in their integrity, never dreaming of cutting out the very scenes that are most necessary for the development of plot and character. Their scenery is good, appropriate, harmonious—and stands, as it always should, in subservience to the plot and human interest in the play: it is so good that you never think of it. So of the costumes: you think you see the person represented. As all is in keeping, so you never criticise what the characters wear. You feel at once, they looked or did not look as they should, and give this subject no further heed. All these matters are deeply studied, but not so deeply talked about as they are here. They are but accessories, and only considered as such.

I feel very grateful for the draped curtain which drops down from the sides after a scene. While it is closed, such furniture as has been necessary for the scene is quietly withdrawn (no sofas pushed on and pulled off by very visible ropes)—and the next scene appears in a few minutes, on the withdrawal of the curtain, quite complete. In this way one of the great difficulties in presenting Shakespeare's plays, arising from the frequent changes of the scene, is got over. In Germany, a play of Shakespeare takes a whole evening; and the Germans will sit four or five hours listening patiently and delightedly to all he has to teach them.

" . . . My love doth so approve him,  
His very stubbornness, his checks, and frowns—  
Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor in them."

She had before, when most unhappy, bidden  
Emilia lay her wedding-sheets that night upon  
her bed. Emilia now tells her she has done so.  
She replies:

"All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me  
In one of these same sheets"—

little thinking how soon that shroud would be  
required. In what follows, what might not be  
done by that silent acting—that eloquence not of  
words but of look and gesture—which is the  
great test of the actor's powers! While Emilia  
is "unpinning" her mistress, I picture to myself  
Desdemona seated, her sad thoughts wandering  
far away, gently taking the jewels from her throat,  
her ears, her fingers; while Emilia uncoils the  
pearls from her hair, untwists its long plaits, and  
gathers them for the night in a loose coil at the  
back of her head. Then, as Emilia kneels at her  
feet to unfasten the embroidered shoes, Desde-  
mona may put her hand admiringly on Emilia's  
head and smooth her fine hair. Meanwhile her  
thoughts are traveling back to her childhood—  
perhaps to that mother whose caresses she so  
early lost and missed, for she had known but  
few from her cold father: in imagination she  
may again feel them. Then she remembers Bar-  
bara, her mother's maid, who loved and was  
forsaken, and who died singing the sad old ditty  
that "expressed her fortune"—an incident likely  
to stamp itself deeply in Desdemona's memory.  
Little had she thought it was to be her death-  
song too!—

" . . . That song to-night  
Will not go from my head. I have much to do,  
But to go hang my head all at one side,  
And sing it like poor Barbara.

"(Sings) 'The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore-  
tree,

Sing all a green willow;

Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the  
stones';

Lay by these:

'Sing willow, willow, willow';

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon.

'Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve'—

Nay, that's not next. Hark! who is't that knocks?

Emil. It's the wind.

Des. 'I called on my false love; but what said  
he then?

Sing willow, willow, willow.'

. . . Good night. Mine eyes do itch:  
Doth not that bode weeping?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I have heard it said so. . .

Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia,  
That there be women do abuse their husbands  
In such gross kind?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong  
For the whole world.

I do not think there is any such woman."

After listening to some of Emilia's worldly max-  
ims, she breaks away from the subject by say-  
ing:

"Good night, good night: Heaven me such uses  
send,  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!"

Although such heavy clouds had passed over  
her happiness, yet Desdemona still loved and  
trusted, and was not, therefore, altogether sad.  
To the last she shows herself to be of a hope-  
ful, generous disposition. She knows how to  
forgive—hopes that what has been the mystery  
of Othello's unkindness is perhaps to be ex-  
plained in the privacy of their chamber, when a  
word of regret, of remorse from him, will win  
her fullest pardon. There is something almost  
sublime in this unshaken love and trust. She  
falls asleep in it—for oh, such a rude awaken-  
ing! The swan had sung her song, and so sinks  
into her death-bed, although she knew it not.

It is, as we have seen, with some presenti-  
ment of sorrow before her that Desdemona goes  
to bed. The shock of Othello's accusation has  
struck to her soul, and shaken her whole being.  
She will not accuse or hear him accused of in-  
justice by Emilia, but her idol can not stand in  
her imagination where he did. He has human  
infirmities, and these far greater than she could  
have looked for. She can think of no indiscre-  
tion of her own, except perhaps suing for their  
old friend Cassio, at a time when Othello was  
not in the mood to listen—when state affairs dis-  
turbed him. Yet how could he, for so slight a  
cause, strike her—disgrace himself and her be-  
fore the gentlemen who came with dispatches  
from Venice, and afterward shock her ears with  
names not to be uttered!—and

"Throw such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
As true hearts can not bear!"

Is this her noble Moor, "so true of mind, and  
made of no such baseness as jealous creatures  
are"?

Sad, disappointed as she is at his unkindness,  
yet her conscience is at rest. Besides, the fit  
seemed past: he had "looked gentler"; so, try-  
ing for more hopeful thoughts, and praying for

the help she needed—worn out, too, as she was by unusual and unexpected trouble—she falls asleep.

It is strange it never occurs to Othello that if Desdemona had really been the "cunning" Venetian he thought her, knowing her vileness discovered, she might have found means easily to bribe those who would have hidden her from his just wrath. Emilia was not so scrupulous a woman as to have refused her assistance. Besides, had not the Moor insulted her also, in language the most gross? And would she not have been, at a word from her mistress, glad enough to thwart him, and help her? But he sees this cunning, past all expressing "vile one" obey his will without a murmur, go quietly to bed, and finds her, with this load of guilt, as he believes, upon her heart, sleeping the sweet sleep of a child. Well may Emilia exclaim of him, "O gull! O dolt!" He sees nothing but what he is primed to see; in all things else "as ignorant as dirt." He may have "looked gentler," but the poison has done its work; and nothing but the life's blood of his victim can, as he says, "remove nor choke the strong conception which I do groan withal." The very serenity of her guiltless soul makes against her. "She must die, or she'll betray more men." What a scene is this! The powers of good and evil have met in mortal strife!

My friends used to say, as Mr. Macready did, that in Desdemona I was "very hard to kill." How could I be otherwise? I *would not* die dishonored in Othello's esteem. This was bitterer than fifty thousand deaths. Then I thought of all his after-suffering, when he should come to know how he had mistaken me! The agony for him which filled my heart, as well as the mortal agony of death, which I felt in imagination, made my cries and struggles no doubt very vehement and very real. My whole soul was flung into the entreaty, but for "half an hour!" "but while I say one prayer!"—which prayer would have been for him. Then, when she hears, for the first time, that Cassio is the supposed accomplice in her guilt, it was as though I spoke for myself in the swift rejoinder—"Send for the man and ask him!"\*

Oh that Othello had been so true a friend and

\* It was a great pleasure to me, when, talking with Mr. Carlyle in 1873 about Mr. Macready's revivals, which he spoke of very warmly, he referred in very glowing terms to my Desdemona. Amid much else, he said he had never felt the play so deeply before. One phrase especially struck me—"It quite hurt him to see the fair, delicate creature so brutally used." Would that I could give an idea of his tone and accent, gentle and tremulous, as if a suffering, living creature were there before him! I quote from my Diary, November 24, 1873.

husband as to do this before! But no; the poison still works, and all she says only serves to augment his fury. When Desdemona hears that Cassio has already lost his life, and that "his mouth is stopped," she naturally weeps the loss of the innocent man, both for his own sake and because he could alone, she thinks, prove her guiltless. All things conspire against her—her very tears, her prayers, her asseverations give countenance to her guilt. She is hurled headlong down the precipice, but, alas! not killed at once. The strong young life *will* not leave its tenement—the mortal agony is prolonged—even the dagger's thrust, which is meant in mercy that she may not "linger in her pain," is not enough. The soul *will* not away until it asserts the purity of the sweet casket in which it has been set. It lingers on in pain until the poor body can speak, not, as before, to deaf ears that will not listen, but to those of a sympathizing woman. Then, with bitter moans and broken breath, she stammers out with her last gasp of life—"A guiltless death I die!"

When asked who has done this deed, she says, "Nobody, I myself." As in the senate-house, before the council, she took all the blame upon herself, so here, once more, and with her dying breath, she does the same. I did it all—"I myself." Blame no one else. "Commend me to my kind lord. Farewell!"

Commend me to my brave warrior! Of what higher heroism than this—of what nobler love—has history or romance any record?

Mr. Macready was very fine in this scene. There was an impressive grandeur, an elevation even, in his ravings:

"... Whip me, ye devils,  
"From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!  
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—  
O Desdemona! Desdemona!—dead! dead! dead!"

As I lay there and listened, he seemed to me to be like a soul in hell, whirling in the second circle of the Inferno. And there were a piteousness and a pathos in his reiteration of the loved one's name that went to my very heart. Oh, how it ached, too, for Othello, when his eyes were opened, and he could see and trace the paltry threads by which his soul and body had been ensnared, and when I heard the broken accents of his shame at having sunk so low as to conspire in Cassio's death!

And now the worst is past. The play begins in night with hurry and turmoil; in night, and what a night, it ends! There are glorious days of perfect happiness between, but they are few, and the last of them overshadowed with clouds "consulting for foul weather," and giving por-

tentous presage of a terrible catastrophe. But not with storm and turmoil does the last night come. The deep blue sky is studded with "chaste stars," not a breath is stirring, and the lapping of the Levant against the castle rock is alone heard through the stillness; while "the sweetest innocent that e'er did lift up eye" is cruelly done to death by him that loved her best.

As we "look upon the tragic loading of that bed," we are not without comfort. Truly it is best so. The wrench which had been given to the bond by which these two noble lovers were united could never be repaired on earth. Life could never again have been to them the same as in their brief days of happiness. The delusion which made Othello mad has been rent from his eyes. He must rejoin her who died with a message for him on her lips. No fear that when they "meet at compt" her look will "hurl his soul from heaven." Her infinite love and pity will think but of his sufferings, and will plead for the forgiveness he dares not ask for himself.

Another victim lies near them, and one who has become almost hallowed by her death.

Whatever may have been Emilia's life before, one can not but feel for her now. She has truly loved and honored Desdemona, all the more that, to her common nature, and with her rough experience of the world, her mistress reveals a purity and elevation of spirit which she had never before so much as dreamed of. We can not forgive the part she plays in giving the dropped handkerchief to her husband, instead of returning it to her lady, knowing how she values it—how she keeps it "always by her to kiss and talk to." Although she has misgivings as to the use her husband means to make of it, yet she gives it to "please his fantasy." She hears Desdemona deplore its loss—"Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?" Yet she can answer, "I know not, madam." She hears the Moor's wild burst of passion when Desdemona owns she "has it not about her"; she sees that its absence has made him jealous; she sees her mistress plunged in grief for its loss, and yet keeps silence. Nothing can excuse that silence, not even her dread of her husband, brutal as she knew him to be—this "honest, honest Iago"! She could have told them of what metal he was made.

Still, she expiates her wrong-doing with her life. With that last interview of an hour back in her thoughts, the old ballad still sounding in her ears, when she next sees her sweet mistress it is to find her breathless—dying from a violent and most unnatural death. Well may she say, "Oh, this grief will kill me!" But she has yet to learn what hand she herself has had in this dismal tragedy—to learn that the handkerchief she stole and gave to her husband, Desdemona had been

accused of giving to Cassio. At last she speaks. Though late, she will make what reparation she can, and she does it unflinchingly. Her husband's threats and his commands that she shall go home do not stop her. She entreats of the others leave to speak. "It is right that I obey him, but not now. Perchance, Iago, I shall ne'er go home." No! there is no more home for any of them. What has she more to live for? Better die, as she does, by Iago's sword, than drag out a life of remorse for disloyalty to her mistress. That mistress is to her the one sole creature of whom she can now think, and with her dying breath she reiterates to Othello the asseverations of her innocence. "She loved thee, cruel Moor; . . . so speaking as I think, I die, I die"; and her last words are a prayer that she may be laid by her mistress's side.

We have learned from Gratiano that Brabantio is dead. No doubt when he returned to his desolate home, Brabantio would become alive to the reality that his daughter had been its very light and life. Self-reproaches would rise to fill her place and embitter his loneliness, reminding him of all he might have been, but had not been, to her. The maiden, so tender, so unobtrusive, had a magic in her presence not consciously known or felt until lost, but which filled his home and life with blessings, and without which their charm was gone, and so the old senator died quickly—"pure grief shore his old thread in twain."

Of Cassio what shall be said? The two creatures he most admired and loved have been brought to ruin, and chiefly through him! By his own folly in the brawl with Roderigo he will be apt to think he laid the groundwork for Iago's plot. He will remember that it was Iago who first urged him to appeal to Desdemona to get him reinstated. Nor can he fail to learn how his importunity and her kindness—"Your solicitor shall rather die than give your cause away!"—helped to bring about the woful catastrophe. If so, what unhappiness is before him! It will take long years to deaden the thought that, but for his fatal weakness, no intercession would have been necessary, and all might have gone well. A great gap has been made in his life. He will never be quite the same man again, though he may be a better and a wiser one. Neither Cyprus nor Venice will hold him long. He will get back, I think, to the books and studies of his youth. Ever present with him will be the image of the victims of the "misadventured piteous overthrow" in which he had unwittingly played so prominent a part. But for him there will be one "enskyed and sainted" above all her sex—one who will keep alive for him his faith in woman, his hopes of the hereafter, when the mysteries of



this "all-unintelligible world" shall be solved; and that one will be—"the divine Desdemona."

Adieu, my friend. I have told you, as you wished me, what I thought about the three important female characters in Shakespeare to which you believed the least justice had been done. Would I had held your pen to write with! Adieu!—Ever affectionately yours,

HELENA FAUCIT MARTIN.

To Miss GERALDINE E. JEWSEY.

[Before this letter was dispatched, I learned that the dear friend for whom it was intended had sunk into a state of unconsciousness. As it was written, however, so I leave it, again praying forbearance for what in it is merely personal—the trifles which would have given it a special value in her eyes.

H. F. M.

31 ONSLOW SQUARE, LONDON, S. W.,  
February 12, 1831.]

*Blackwood's Magazine.*

## BYRON.

WHEN at last I held in my hand the volume of poems which I had chosen from Wordsworth, and began to turn over its pages, there arose in me almost immediately the desire to see beside it, as a companion volume, a like collection of the best poetry of Byron. Alone among our poets of the earlier part of this century, Byron and Wordsworth not only furnish material enough for a volume of this kind, but also, as it seems to me, they both of them gain considerably by being thus exhibited. There are poems of Coleridge and of Keats equal, if not superior, to anything of Byron or Wordsworth; but a dozen pages or two will contain them, and the remaining poetry is of a quality much inferior. Scott never, I think, rises as a poet to the level of Byron and Wordsworth at all. On the other hand, he never falls below his own usual level very far; and by a volume of selections from him, therefore, his effectiveness is not increased. As to Shelley there will be more question; and, indeed, Mr. Stopford Brooke, whose accomplishments, eloquence, and love of poetry we must all recognize and admire, has actually given us Shelley in such a volume. But for my own part I can not think that Shelley's poetry, except by snatches and fragments, has the value of the good work of Wordsworth or Byron; or that it is possible for even Mr. Stopford Brooke to make up a volume of selections from him which, for real substance, power, and worth, can at all take rank with a like volume from Byron or Wordsworth.

Shelley knew quite well the difference between the achievement of such a poet as Byron and his own. He praises Byron too unreservedly, but he sincerely felt, and he was right in feeling, that Byron was a greater poetical power than himself. At a thousand points Shelley was immeasurably Byron's superior; he is a beautiful and enchanting spirit, whose vision, when we call it up, has far more loveliness, more charm for

our soul, than the vision of Byron. But all the personal charm of Shelley can not hinder us from at last discovering in his poetry the incurable want, in general, of a sound subject-matter, and the incurable fault, in consequence, of unsubstantiality. Those who extol him as the poet of clouds, the poet of sunsets, are only saying that he did not, in fact, lay hold upon the poet's right subject-matter; and in honest truth, with all his charm of soul and spirit, and with all his gift of musical diction and movement, he never, or hardly ever, did. Except, as I have said, for a few short things and single stanzas, his original poetry is less satisfactory than his translations, for in these the subject-matter was found for him. Nay, I doubt whether his delightful essays and letters, which deserve to be far more read than they are now, will not resist the wear and tear of time better, and finally come to stand higher, than his poetry.

There remain to be considered Byron and Wordsworth. That Wordsworth affords good material for a volume of selections, and that he gains by having his poetry thus presented, is a belief of mine which led me lately to make up a volume of poems chosen out of Wordsworth, and to bring it before the public. By its kind reception of the volume, the public seems to show itself a partaker in my belief. Now, Byron also supplies plenty of material for a like volume, and he too gains, I think, by being so presented. Mr. Swinburne urges, indeed, that "Byron, who rarely wrote anything either worthless or faultless, can only be judged or appreciated in the mass; the greatest of his works was his whole work taken together." It is quite true that Byron rarely wrote anything either worthless or faultless; it is quite true, also, that in the appreciation of Byron's power a sense of the amount and variety of his work, defective though much of his work is, enters justly into our estimate. But, although there may be little in Byron's poetry which can

be pronounced either worthless or faultless, there are portions of it which are far higher in worth and far more free from fault than others. And although, again, the abundance and variety of his production are undoubtedly a proof of his power, yet I question whether by reading everything which he gives us we are so likely to acquire an admiring sense even of his variety and abundance, as by reading what he gives us at his happier moments. Varied and abundant he amply proves himself even by this taken alone. Receive him absolutely without omission or compression, follow his whole outpouring stanza by stanza and verse by verse from the very commencement to the very end, and he is capable of being tiresome.

Byron has told us himself that the "Giaour" "is but a string of passages." He has made full confession of his own negligence. "No one," says he, "has done more through negligence to corrupt the language." This accusation brought by himself against his poems is not just; but when he goes on to say of them, that "their faults, whatever they may be, are those of negligence and not of labor," he says what is perfectly true. "'Lara,'" he declares, "I wrote while undressing after coming home from balls and masquerades, in the year of revelry, 1814. The 'Bride' was written in four, the 'Corsair' in ten days." He calls this "a humiliating confession, as it proves my own want of judgment in publishing, and the public's in reading, things which can not have stamina for permanence." Again, he does his poems injustice; the producer of such poems could not but publish them, the public could not but read them. Nor could Byron have produced his work in any other fashion; his poetic work could not have first grown and matured in his own mind, and then come forth as an organic whole; Byron had not enough of the artist in him for this, nor enough of self-command. He wrote, as he truly tells us, to relieve himself, and he went on writing because he found the relief become indispensable. But it was inevitable that works so produced should be, in general, "a string of passages," poured out, as he describes them, with rapidity and excitement, and with new passages constantly suggesting themselves, and added while his work was going through the press. It is evident that we have here neither deliberate scientific construction, nor yet the instinctive artistic creation of poetic wholes; and that to take passages from work produced as Byron's was is a very different thing from taking passages out of the "Edipus" or "The Tempest," and deprives the poetry far less of its advantage.

Nay, it gives advantage to the poetry, instead of depriving it of any. Byron, I said, has not a

great artist's profound and patient skill in combining an action or in developing a character—a skill which we must watch and follow if we are to do justice to it. But he has a wonderful power of vividly conceiving a single incident, a single situation; of throwing himself upon it, grasping it as if it were real, and he saw and felt it, and of making us see and feel it too. The "Giaour" is, as he truly called it, "a string of passages," not a work moving by a deep internal law of development to a necessary end; and our total impression from it can not but receive from this, its inherent defect, a certain dimness and indistinctness. But the incidents of the journey and death of Hassan, in that poem, are conceived and presented with a vividness not to be surpassed; and our impression from them is correspondingly clear and powerful. In "Lara," again, there is no adequate development either of the character of the chief personage or of the action of the poem; our total impression from the work is a confused one. Yet such an incident as the disposal of the slain Ezzelin's body passes before our eyes as if we actually saw it. And in the same way as these bursts of incident, bursts of sentiment also, living and vigorous, often occur in the midst of poems which must be admitted to be but weakly-conceived and loosely-combined wholes. Byron can not but be a gainer by having attention concentrated upon what is vivid, powerful, effective in his work, and withdrawn from what is not so.

Byron, I say, can not but be a gainer by this, just as Wordsworth is a gainer by a like proceeding. I esteem Wordsworth's poetry so highly, and the world, in my opinion, has done it such scant justice, that I could not rest until I had fulfilled, on Wordsworth's behalf, a long-cherished desire—had disengaged, to the best of my power, his good work from the inferior work joined with it, and had placed before the public the body of his good work by itself. To the poetry of Byron the world has ardently paid homage; full justice from his contemporaries, perhaps even more than justice, his torrent of poetry received. His poetry was admired, adored, "with all its imperfections on its head"—in spite of negligence, in spite of diffuseness, in spite of repetitions, in spite of whatever faults it possessed. His name is still great and brilliant. Nevertheless the hour of irresistible vogue has passed away for him; even for Byron it could not but pass away. The time has come for him, as it comes for all poets, when he must take his real and permanent place, no longer depending upon the vogue of his own day and upon the enthusiasm of his contemporaries. Whatever we may think of him, we shall not be subjugated by him as they were; for, as he can not be for us

what he was for them, we can not admire him so hotly and indiscriminately as they. His faults of negligence, of diffuseness, of repetition, his faults of whatever kind, we shall abundantly feel and unsparingly criticise; the mere interval of time between us and him makes disillusion of this kind inevitable. But how, then, will Byron stand, if we relieve him too, so far as we can, of the incumbrance of his inferior and weakest work, and if we bring before us his best and strongest work in one body together? That is the question which I, who can even remember the latter years of Byron's vogue, and have myself felt the expiring wave of that mighty influence, but who certainly also regard him, and have long regarded him, without illusion, can not but ask myself, can not but seek to answer.

Byron has been overpraised, no doubt. "Byron is one of our French superstitions," says M. Edmond Scherer; but where has Byron not been a superstition? He pays now the penalty of this exaggerated worship. "Alone among the English poets his contemporaries, Byron," said M. Taine, "*atteint à la cime*—gets to the top of the poetic mountain." But the idol which M. Taine had thus adored M. Scherer is almost for burning. "In Byron," he declares, "there is a remarkable inability ever to lift himself into the region of real poetic art—art impersonal and disinterested—at all. He has fecundity, eloquence, wit, but even these qualities themselves are confined within somewhat narrow limits. He has treated hardly any subject but one—himself; now the man, in Byron, is of a nature even less sincere than the poet. This *beau ténébreux* hides a coxcomb. He posed all his life long."

Our poet could not well meet with more severe and unsympathetic criticism. However, the praise often given to Byron has been so exaggerated as to provoke, perhaps, a reaction in which he is unduly disparaged. "As various in composition as Shakespeare himself, Lord Byron has embraced," says Sir Walter Scott, "every topic of human life, and sounded every string on the divine harp, from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones." It is not surprising that some one with a cool head should retaliate, on such provocation as this, by saying: "He has treated hardly any subject but one, *himself*." In "the very grand and tremendous drama of 'Cain,'" says Scott, "Lord Byron has certainly matched Milton on his own ground." And Lord Byron has done all this, Scott adds, "while managing his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality." Alas! "managing his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality," Byron wrote in his "Cain":

"Souls that dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in  
His everlasting face, and tell him that  
His evil is not good";

or he wrote:

"... and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring  
To the great double Mysteries! the *two Principles*!"\*

One has only to repeat to one's self a line from "Paradise Lost" in order to feel the difference.

Sainte-Beuve, speaking of that exquisite master of language, the Italian poet Leopardi, remarks how often we see the alliance, singular though it may at first sight appear, of the poetical genius with the genius for scholarship and philology. Dante and Milton are instances that will occur to every one's mind. Byron is so negligent in his poetical style, he is often, to say the truth, so slovenly, slipshod, and infelicitous, he is so little haunted by the true artist's fine passion for the correct use and consummate management of words, that he may be described as having for this artistic gift the insensibility of the barbarian; which is perhaps only another and a less flattering way of saying, with Scott, that he "manages his pen with the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality." Just of a piece with the rhythm of

"Dare you await the event of a few minutes' deliberation?"

or of

"All shall be void—  
Destroyed!"

is the diction of

"Which now is painful to these eyes,  
Which have not seen the sun to rise";

or of

"... there let him lay!"

or of the famous passage beginning—

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead";

with those trailing relatives, that crying grammatical solecism, that inextricable anacolouthon! To class the work of the author of such things with the work of the authors of such verse as

"In the dark backward and abysm of time—"

or as

"Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,  
Or the tale of Troy divine—"

is ridiculous. These poets, with their secret of consummate felicity in diction and movement, are of another and an altogether higher order from Byron, nay, for that matter, from Wordsworth also; from the author of such verse as

\* The italics are in the original.

"Sol hath dropped into his harbor—"

or (if Mr. Ruskin pleases) as

"Parching summer hath no warrant—"

as from the author of

"All shall be void—  
Destroyed!"

With a poetical gift and a poetical performance of the very highest order, the slovenliness and tunelessness of much of Byron's production, the pompousness and ponderousness of much of Wordsworth's, are incompatible. Let us admit this to the full.

Moreover, while we are hearkening to M. Scherer, and going along with him in his fault-finding, let us admit, too, that the man in Byron is in many respects as unsatisfactory as the poet. And, putting aside all direct moral criticism of him—with which we need not concern ourselves here—we shall find that he is unsatisfactory in the same way. Some of Byron's most crying faults as a man, his vulgarity, his affectation, are really akin to the faults of commonness, of want of art, in his workmanship as a poet. The ideal nature for the poet and artist is that of the finely touched and finely gifted man, the *εὐφυής* of the Greeks; now, Byron's nature was in substance not that of the *εὐφυής* at all, but rather, as I have said, of the barbarian. The want of fine perception which made it possible for him to formulate either the comparison between himself and Rousseau, or his reason for getting Lord Delawarr excused from a "licking" at Harrow, is exactly what made possible for him, also, his terrible dealings in, *An ye wold; I have redde thee; Sunburn me; Oons, and it is excellent well*. It is exactly, again, what made possible for him his precious dictum that Pope is a Greek temple, and a string of other criticisms of the like force; it is exactly, in fine, what deteriorated the quality of his poetic production. If we think of a good representative of that finely touched and exquisitely gifted nature which is the ideal nature for the poet and artist—if we think of Raphael, for instance, who truly is *εὐφυής* just as Byron is not—we shall bring into clearer light the connection in Byron between the faults of the man and the faults of the poet. With Raphael's character Byron's sins of vulgarity and false criticism would have been impossible, just as with Raphael's art Byron's sins of common and bad workmanship.

Yes, all this is true, but it is not the whole truth about Byron nevertheless; very far from it. The severe criticism of M. Scherer by no means gives us the whole truth about Byron, and we have not yet got it in what has been added to that criticism here. The negative part of the

true criticism of him we perhaps have; the positive part, by far the more important, we have not. His admirers appeal eagerly to foreign testimonies in his favor. Some of these testimonies do not much move me; but one testimony there is among them which will always carry, with me at any rate, very great weight—the testimony of Goethe. Goethe's sayings about Byron were uttered, it must, however, be remembered, at the height of Byron's vogue, when that puissant and splendid personality was exercising its full power of attraction. In Goethe's own household there was an atmosphere of glowing Byron-worship; his daughter-in-law was a passionate admirer of Byron, nay, she enjoyed and prized his poetry, as did Tieck and so many others in Germany at that time, much above the poetry of Goethe himself. Instead of being irritated and rendered jealous by this, a nature like Goethe's was inevitably led by it to heighten, not lower, the note of his praise. The *Time-Spirit*, or *Zeit-Geist*,\* he would himself have said, was working just then for Byron. This working of the *Zeit-Geist* in his favor was an advantage added to Byron's other advantages, an advantage of which he had a right to get the benefit. This is what Goethe would have thought and said to himself, and so he would have been led even to heighten somewhat his estimate of Byron, and to accentuate the emphasis of praise. Goethe, speaking of Byron at that moment, was not and could not be quite the same cool critic as Goethe speaking of Dante, or Molière, or Milton. This, I say, we ought to remember in reading Goethe's judgments on Byron and his poetry. Still, if we are careful to bear this in mind, and if we quote Goethe's praise correctly—which is not always done by those who in this country quote it—and if we add to it that great and due qualification added to it by Goethe himself—which, so far as I have seen, has never yet been done by his quoters in this country at all—then we shall have a judgment on Byron which comes, I think, very near to the truth, and which may well command our adherence.

In his judicious and interesting "Life of Byron," Professor Nichol quotes Goethe as saying that Byron "is undoubtedly to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century." What Goethe did really say was "the greatest *talent*," not "the greatest *genius*." The difference is important, because, while talent gives the notion of power in a man's performance, genius gives rather the notion of felicity and perfection in it; and this divine gift of consummate felicity by no means, as we have seen, belongs to Byron and to his poetry. Goethe said that Byron "must unquestionably be regarded as the greatest talent of the

\* "Der ohne Frage als das grösste Talent des Jahrhunderts anzusehen ist."



century." He said of him, moreover: "The English may think of Byron what they please, but it is certain that they can point to no poet who is his like. He is different from all the rest, and, in the main, greater." Here, again, Professor Nichol translates: "They can show no (living) poet who is to be compared to him"—inserting the word *living*, I suppose, to prevent its being thought that Goethe would have ranked Byron, as a poet, above Shakespeare and Milton. But Goethe did not use, or, I think, mean to imply, any limitation such as is added by Professor Nichol. Goethe said simply, and he meant to say, "no poet." Only the words which follow\* ought not, I think, to be rendered, "who is to be compared to him," that is to say, "*who is his equal as a poet.*" They mean rather, "who may properly be compared with him," "*who is his parallel.*" And, when Goethe said that Byron was "in the main greater" than all the rest of the English poets, he was not so much thinking of the strict rank, as poetry, of Byron's production; he was thinking of that wonderful personality of Byron which so enters into his poetry, and which Goethe called "a personality such, for its eminence, as has never been yet, and such as is not likely to come again." He was thinking of that "daring, dash, and grandiosity,"† of Byron, which are indeed so splendid; and which were, so Goethe maintained, of a character to do good, because "everything great is formative," and what is thus formative does us good.

The faults which went with this greatness, and which impaired Byron's poetical work, Goethe saw very well. He saw the constant state of warfare and combat, the "negative and polemical working," which makes Byron's poetry a poetry in which we can so little find rest; he saw the *Hang zum Unbegrenzten*, the straining after the unlimited, which made it impossible for Byron to produce poetic wholes such as "The Tempest" or "Lear"; he saw the *zu viel Empirie*, the promiscuous adoption of all the matter offered to the poet by life, just as it was offered, without thought or patience for the mysterious transmutation to be operated on this matter by poetic form. But, in a sentence which I can not, as I say, remember to have yet seen quoted anywhere in English words, Goethe lays his finger on the cause of all these defects in Byron, and on his real source of weakness both as a man and as a poet. "The moment he reflects, he is a child," says Goethe—"sobald er reflectirt, ist er ein Kind."

Now, if we take the two parts of Goethe's

\* "Der ihm zu vergleichen wäre."

† "Byron's Kühnheit, Keckheit und Grandiosität, ist das nicht alles bildend?—Alles Grosse bildet, sobald wir es gewahr werden."

criticism of Byron, the favorable and the unfavorable, and put them together, we shall have, I think, the truth. On the one hand a splendid and puissant personality, a personality "in eminence such as has never been yet, and is not likely to come again"; of which the like, therefore, is not to be found among the poets of our nation, by which Byron "is different from all the rest, and, in the main, greater." Byron is, moreover, "the greatest talent of our century." On the other hand, this splendid personality and unmatched talent, this unique Byron, "is quite too much in the dark about himself";\* nay, "the moment he begins to reflect he is a child." There we have, I think, Byron complete; and, in estimating him and ranking him, we have to strike a balance between the gain which accrues to his poetry, as compared with the productions of other poets, from his superiority, and the loss which accrues to it from his defects.

A balance of this kind has to be struck in the case of all poets except the few supreme masters in whom a profound criticism of life exhibits itself in indissoluble connection with the laws of poetic truth and beauty. I have seen it said that I allege poetry to have for its characteristic this: that it is a criticism of life; and that I make it to be thereby distinguished from prose, which is something else. So far from it, that when I first used this expression, a *criticism of life*, now many years ago, it was to literature in general that I applied it, and not to poetry in especial. "The end and aim of all literature," I said, "is, if one considers it attentively, nothing but that—a *criticism of life.*" And so it surely is; the main end and aim of all our utterance, whether in prose or in verse, is surely a criticism of life. We are not brought much on our way, I admit, toward an adequate definition of poetry as distinguished from prose by that truth; still a truth it is, and poetry can never prosper if it is forgotten. In poetry, however, the criticism of life has to be made conformably to the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Truth and seriousness of substance and matter, felicity and perfection of diction and manner, as these are exhibited in the best poets, are what constitute a criticism of life made in conformity with the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty; and it is by knowing and feeling the work of those poets, that we learn to recognize the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of such conditions.

The moment, however, that we leave the small band of the very best poets, the true classics, and deal with poets of the next rank, we shall find that perfect truth and seriousness of

\* "Gar zu dunkel über sich selbst."

matter, in close alliance with perfect truth and felicity of manner, is the rule no longer. We have now to take what we can get, to forego something here, to admit compensation for it there, to strike a balance, and to see how our poets stand in respect to one another when that balance has been struck. Let us observe how this is so.

We will take three poets, among the most considerable of our century: Leopardi, Byron, Wordsworth. Giacomo Leopardi was ten years younger than Byron, and he died thirteen years after him; both of them, therefore, died young—Byron at the age of thirty-six, Leopardi at the age of thirty-nine. Both of them were of noble birth, both of them suffered from physical defect, both of them were in revolt against the established facts and beliefs of their age; but here the likeness between them ends. The stricken poet of Recanati had no country, for an Italy in his day did not exist; he had no audience, no celebrity. The volume of his poems, published in the very year of Byron's death, hardly sold, I suppose, its tens, while the volumes of Byron's poetry were selling their tens of thousands. And yet Leopardi has the very qualities which we have found wanting to Byron; he has the sense for form and style, the passion for just expression, the sure and firm touch of the true artist. Nay, more, he has a grave fullness of knowledge, an insight into the real bearings of the questions which as a skeptical poet he raises, a power of seizing the real point, a lucidity, with which the author of "Cain" has nothing to compare. I can hardly imagine Leopardi reading the

"... And thou wouldst go on aspiring  
To the great double Mysteries! the two Principles!"

or following Byron in his theological controversy with Dr. Kennedy, without having his features overspread by a calm and fine smile, and remarking of his brilliant contemporary, as Goethe did, that "the moment he begins to reflect, he is a child." But indeed whoever wishes to feel the full superiority of Leopardi over Byron in philosophic thought and in the expression of it, has only to read one paragraph of one poem, the paragraph of "La Ginestra" beginning

"Sovente in queste piagge."

and ending

"Non so se il riso o la pietà prevale."

In like manner, Leopardi is at many points the poetic superior of Wordsworth too. He has a far wider culture than Wordsworth, more mental lucidity, more freedom from illusions as to the real character of the established fact and of

reigning conventions; above all, this Italian, with his pure and sure touch, with his fineness of perception, is far more of the artist. Such a piece of pompous dullness as

"O for the coming of that glorious time,"

and all the rest of it, or such lumbering verse as Mr. Ruskin's enemy—

"Parching summer hath no warrant,"

would have been as impossible to Leopardi as to Dante. Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority?—for the worth of what he has given us in poetry I hold to be greater, on the whole, than the worth of what Leopardi has given us. It is in Wordsworth's sound and profound sense

"Of joy in widest commonality spread";

whereas Leopardi remains with his thoughts ever fixed upon the *essenza insanabile*, upon the *acerbo, indegno mistero delle cose*. It is in the power with which Wordsworth feels the resources of joy offered to us in nature, offered to us in the primary human affections and duties, and in the power with which in his moments of inspiration he renders this joy and makes us, too, feel it, a force greater than himself seeming to lift him and to prompt his tongue, so that he speaks in a style far above any style of which he has the constant command, and with a truth far beyond any philosophic truth of which he has the conscious and assured possession. Neither Leopardi nor Wordsworth is of the same order with the great poets who made such verse as

"Τὰντὸν γὰρ Μοῖρα θυμὸς θέσεν ἀνθρώποις"

or as

"In la sua volontade e nostra pace";

or as

"... Men must endure

Their going hence, even as their coming hither;  
Ripeness is all."

But, as compared with Leopardi, Wordsworth, though at many points less lucid, though far less a master of style, far less of an artist, gains so much by his criticism of life being, in certain matters of profound importance, healthful and true, whereas Leopardi's pessimism is not, that the value of Wordsworth's poetry, on the whole, stands higher for us than that of Leopardi's, as it stands higher for us, I think, than that of any modern poetry except Goethe's.

Byron's poetic value is also greater, on the whole, than Leopardi's; and his superiority turns, in the same way, upon the surpassing worth of something which he had and was, after all deduction has been made for his shortcomings. We talk of Byron's *personality*, "a personality

in eminence such as has never been yet, and is not likely to come again," and we say that by this personality he is "different from all the rest of English poets, and in the main greater." But can we not be a little more circumstantial, and name that in which the wonderful power of this personality consisted? We can; with the instinct of a poet Mr. Swinburne has seized upon it and named it for us. The power of Byron's personality lies in "the splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offenses and outweighs all his defects: *the excellence of sincerity and strength.*"

Byron found our nation, after its long and victorious struggle with revolutionary France, fixed in a system of established facts and dominant ideas which revolted him. The mental bondage of the most powerful part of our nation, of its strong middle class, to a narrow and false system of this kind, is what we call British Philistinism. That bondage is unbroken to this hour, but in Byron's time it was even far more deep and dark than it is now. Byron was an aristocrat, and it is not difficult for an aristocrat to look on the prejudices and habits of the British Philistine with skepticism and disdain. Plenty of young men of his own class Byron met at Almack's or at Lady Jersey's, who regarded the established facts and reigning beliefs of the England of that day with as little reverence as he did. But these men, disbelievers in British Philistinism in private, entered English public life, the most conventional in the world, and at once they saluted with respect the habits and ideas of British Philistinism as if they were a part of the order of creation, and as if in public no sane man would think of warring against them. With Byron it was different. What he called the *cant* of the great middle part of the English nation, what we call its Philistinism, revolted him; but the cant of his own class, deferring to this Philistinism and profiting by it while they disbelieved in it, revolted him even more. "Come what may," are his own words, "I will never flatter the million's canting in any shape." His class in general, on the other hand, shrugged their shoulders at this cant, laughed at it, pandered to it, and ruled by it. The falsehood, cynicism, insolence, misgovernment, oppression, with their consequent unflinching crop of human misery, which were produced by this state of things, roused Byron to irreconcilable revolt and battle. They made him indignant, they infuriated him; they were so strong, so defiant, so maleficent—and yet he felt that they were doomed. "You have seen every trampler down in turn," he comforts himself with saying, "from Bonaparte to the simplest individuals." The old order, as after 1815 it stood victorious, with its ignorance and

misery below, its cant, selfishness, and cynicism above, was at home and abroad equally hateful to him. "I have simplified my politics," he writes, "into an utter detestation of all existing governments." And again: "Give me a republic. The king-times are fast finishing; there will be blood shed like water and tears like mist, but the peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I foresee it." This is not the sort of Liberal peer to move the Address in the House of Lords, to pay compliments to the energy and self-reliance of British middle-class Liberalism, and to adapt his politics to suit it. Byron threw himself upon poetry as his organ; and in poetry his topics were not Queen Mab, and the Witch of Atlas, and the Sensitive-Plant, they were the upholders of the old order, George III, and Lord Castlereagh, and the Duke of Wellington, and Southey, and they were the canters and trampers of the great world, and they were his enemies and himself.

Such was Byron's personality, by which "he is different from all the rest of English poets, and, in the main, greater." But he posed all his life, says M. Scherer. Let us distinguish. There is the Byron who posed, there is the Byron with his affectations and silliness, the Byron whose weakness Lady Blessington, with a woman's acuteness, so admirably seized: "His great defect is flippancy and a total want of self-possession." But when this theatrical and easily criticised personage betook himself to poetry, and when he had fairly warmed to his work, then he became another man; then the theatrical personage passed away; then a higher power took possession of him and filled him; then at last came forth into light that true and puissant personality, with its direct strokes, its ever-welling force, its satire, its energy, and its agony. This is the real Byron; whoever stops at the theatrical preludings does not know him. And this real Byron may well be superior to the stricken Leopardi, may well be declared "different from all the rest of English poets, and, in the main, greater," in so far as it is true of him, as M. Taine well says, that "all other souls, in comparison with his, seem inert"; in so far as it is true of him that with superb, exhaustless energy he maintained, as Professor Nichol well says, "the struggle that keeps alive, if it does not save, the soul": in so far, finally, as he deserves (and he does deserve) the noble praise of him which I have already quoted from Mr. Swinburne; the praise for "the splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offenses and outweighs all his defects: the excellence of sincerity and strength."

True, as a man, Byron could not manage himself, could not guide his ways aright, but

was all astray. True, he has no light, can not lead us from the past to the future; "the moment he reflects, he is a child." True, as a poet, he has no fine and exact sense for word, and structure, and rhythm; he has not the artist's nature and gifts. Yet a personality of Byron's force counts for so much in life, and a rhetorician of Byron's force counts for so much in literature! But it would be most unjust to label Byron, as M. Scherer is disposed to label him, as a rhetorician only. Along with his astounding power and passion, he had a strong and deep sense for what is beautiful in nature, and for what is beautiful in human action and suffering. When he warms to his work, when he is inspired, Nature herself seems to take the pen from him, as she took it from Wordsworth, and to write for him as she wrote for Wordsworth, though in a different fashion, with her own penetrating simplicity. Goethe has well observed of Byron, that when he is at his happiest his representation of things is as easy and real as if he were improvising. It is so; and his verse then exhibits quite another and a higher quality from the rhetorical quality—admirable as this also in its own kind of merit is—of such verse as—

"Minions of splendor shrinking from distress,"

and of so much more verse of Byron's of that stamp. Nature takes the pen for him; and then, assured master of a true poetic style though he is not, any more than Wordsworth, yet as from Wordsworth at his best there will come such verse as—

"And never lifted up a single stone,"

so from Byron, too, at his best, there will come such verse as—

"He heard it, but he heeded not; his eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away."

Of verse of this high quality, Byron has much; of verse of a quality lower than this, of a quality rather rhetorical than truly poetic, yet still of extraordinary power and merit, he has still more. To separate, from the mass of poetry which Byron poured forth, all this higher portion, so superior to the mass, and still so considerable in quantity, and to present it in one body by itself, would be to do a service, I believe, to Byron's reputation, and to the poetic glory of our country. Surely the critic who does most for his author is the critic who gains readers for his author himself, not for any lucubrations on his author; gains more readers for him, and enables those readers to read him with more admiration.

And in spite of his prodigious vogue, Byron has never yet, perhaps, had the serious admiration which he deserves. Society read him and talked about him, as it reads and talks about "Endymion" to-day; and with the same sort of

result. It looked in Byron's glass as it looks in Lord Beaconsfield's, and sees, or fancies that it sees, its own face there; and then it goes its way, and straightway forgets what manner of man it saw. Even of his passionate admirers, how many never got beyond the theatrical Byron, from whom they caught the fashion of deranging their hair, or of knotting their neck-handkerchief, or of leaving their shirt-collar unbuttoned; how few profoundly felt his vital influence, the influence of his splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength!

His own aristocratic class, whose cynical make-believe drove him to fury; the great middle class, on whose impregnable Philistinism he shattered himself to pieces—how little has either of these felt Byron's vital influence! As the inevitable break-up of the old order comes, as the English middle class slowly awakens from its intellectual sleep of two centuries, as our actual present world, to which this sleep has condemned us, shows itself more clearly—our world of an aristocracy materialized and null, a middle class purblind and hideous, a lower class crude and brutal—we shall turn our eyes again, and to more purpose, upon this passionate and dauntless soldier of a forlorn hope, who, ignorant of the future and unconsolated by its promises, nevertheless waged against the conservation of the old impossible world so fiery battle; waged it till he fell—waged it with such splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength.

Wordsworth's value is of another kind. Wordsworth has an insight into permanent sources of joy and consolation for mankind which Byron has not; his poetry gives us more which we may rest upon than Byron's, more which we can rest upon now, and which men may rest upon always. I place his poetry, therefore, above Byron's on the whole, although in some points he was greatly Byron's inferior. But these two, Wordsworth and Byron, stand, it seems to me, first and preëminent in actual performance, a glorious pair, among the English poets of this century. Keats had probably, indeed, a more consummate poetic gift than either of them; but he died having produced too little and being as yet too immature to rival them. I for my part can never even think of equaling with them any other of their contemporaries; either Coleridge, poet and philosopher wrecked in a mist of opium; or Shelley, beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain. Wordsworth and Byron stand out by themselves. When the year 1900 is turned, and our nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which has then just ended, the first names with her will be these.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (*Macmillan's Magazine*).



## ART NEEDLEWORK.\*

## I.

DEAR SIR: It is, indeed, well for the women of England without employment, or who, when employed, are only half paid, that public attention should be claimed for the question of their right to live, and their means for obtaining a maintenance according to their abilities.

If a woman is not strong enough to be a maid-of-all-work, if she is not smart enough to wait behind a counter, nor ingenious enough to make bonnets, nor clever enough to keep a lodging-house, nor sufficiently educated to be a governess, nor sufficiently intellectual to translate foreign books into moderately good English, nor yet strong-minded enough to write novels that will sell, what is she to do? In each of these occupations the struggle "for the survival of the fittest" is most severe, and those whom nature and education have not made strong enough to succeed must starve, or be supported by private charity, which is degradation, or by public charity, which means the workhouse. It has been said, and echoes through all time, that a woman's proper avocation is to "suckle fools," etc. But many more women are born than are needed for this laudable purpose; and so Providence has arranged that there should be a good many to spare for inferior uses. If the laws of marriage should be revolutionized (and the deceased wife's sister would be the thin end of the wedge), perhaps a moderate bigamy might be legalized, and so more fools would be the consequence, and more women would find occupation. Meanwhile, the wisdom of ages only suggests one other alternative—"Go spin, you jades."

Women did spin, and they wove and worked, too, within the last fifty years, till steam, and the power-loom, and machine embroidery, wrested from them their "woman's work," and gave it to the strong man, that thenceforth all textile inventions should be manufactured by thousands of yards, to be paid for cheaply, and sold only a little less cheaply. From that time women have mostly served in herds, as "hands" in the crowded manufactories. I remember when I was young, more than half a century ago, seeing a beautiful girl at Tivoli, who was much courted by the youth of the place, as being industrious and capable, and likely to make an excellent wife. She

sat at her loom weaving from daylight till mid-day, and then embroidered till sunset, when she arrayed herself in some of her own work, and went to enjoy the public walk in all the bravery of her picturesque costume and the acknowledged supremacy of her loveliness, till the stars announced supper-time, after which she spun till midnight. Her name was Rosa Dante; and she enjoyed her own creations in colored worsteds on linen she had herself woven, more than her great namesake ever enjoyed the creations of his own sad and majestic genius. We can not dwell on these pleasant pictures of the past without wishing to revive them, as far as we may, for the benefit of at least some of our countrywomen.

But English girls are mostly ambitious. They are the boys' equals at the board-school classes, and help to cram their little brothers for the examinations, and, though helping also the drudging mother at home, they despise her sordid life, and emulate for themselves a higher future. Some who, though very poor, belong to the better class, work at night in the art-school of their district, or they read for diplomas, and strive for college honors, admitted, though not yet awarded. They try to become doctors, and, failing in that, they fight the doctors on their common platform, the hospital ward, a melancholy sight for gods and men; they are all seeking to do good, but they are not yet entirely educated to the sense of what their position must be; and, if we believe all that is said, it appears that there is none that doeth good—no, not one. Yet surely, if there is one thing that a woman ought to be fit for, it is the nursing of the sick, also the teaching of little children; but the schoolmaster is abroad everywhere, and the village schoolmistresses are few and far between. In both these professions the ranks are filled. There are already too many nurses and teachers; and the pretty and innocent crowd of girls, who are still young enough to hope, are pressing forward. They crush, many fall, and their cry is still for bread, and for the work to show for it. The strong man emigrates, but there is no phase of life in the Bush for women yet, though some of the colonies are beginning to send for domestic servants and wives.

Why repeat all this? The grievance is not new. It has been the subject of much eloquence and much nonsense, and of a little practical help. In your letter you inquire how far the Royal School of Art Needlework has advanced toward a partial solution of this problem, "How to employ gentlewomen far removed from indepen-

\* This paper was written in reply to a letter asking information, and stating that a series of articles upon the remunerative employment of gentlewomen was contemplated for this Review.—*Editor Nineteenth Century.*

dence." We may truly answer, that it has set a fashion: and that is the first step toward creating an industry.

It is now only eight years since the school made a modest beginning in a small room in Sloane Street with twenty workers, all taught by Lady Welby, with the assistance of Mrs. Dolby, who was already known as the authoress of a practical book on ecclesiastical embroidery. It was the urgent need for employment for women of education, born ladies, and reduced to poverty by the misfortunes or mistakes of their parents, that suggested this revival of decorative needlework. There was a blank also in the idle occupation of the rich woman who, nauseated with German patterns of Berlin wool-work, had fallen back, like Queen Anne, to knitting and crochet. No wonder that the revival of "crewels on linen," and other more splendid material and work-stitches, should have been hailed with delight, and that every woman embarked in a piece of so-called "art needlework." The name was new, the coloring and the stitches were old, and the style elastic enough to admit any degree of originality for the ambitious, or servile copying for the humble.

The little school grew so fast under the fostering care of its active president, her Royal Highness the Princess Christian, that in the course of three years it had to be removed twice to more roomy quarters; and in 1875 it was finally settled in the Belgian Annexe in Exhibition Road, when the Queen graciously became the patron; and in 1878 it was formed into an incorporated association under the Board of Trade, with a president and vice-president, a manager and staff, and a council of management, a finance committee, and a fine-art sub-committee. No trouble has been spared to make it a permanent institution, as a school and as a center for the recognized auxiliary art of decorative needlework in the United Kingdom.

Including the Branch School at Glasgow, the Royal School of Art Needlework gives permanent employment to about one hundred and thirty-five ladies, of whom ninety are needlewomen; and these are always busy executing orders, and preparing work for amateurs or specimens for the show-room.

The studio employs about eighteen young artists, some of them pupils of the South Kensington School of Design. These leave the school when they find that they can obtain more satisfactory work elsewhere.

The very large correspondence and the necessarily somewhat intricate book-keeping are, under the manager, carried out by the assistant secretary, the accountant, and their assistants, seven in all. The actual embroidery is superintended by

a most competent head, who has learned her craft in foreign schools; under her are teachers in different styles; and lessons are given in private houses as well as in classes at the Royal School itself.

There is not space to enter into further details, but in answer to one of your questions I would state that an average worker earns about twenty-five shillings a week, a very good one about two pounds, and the lowest, slowest, or least able worker no more than fifteen shillings. This can hardly be called a living, but it is better than no occupation at all.

The Royal School of Art Needlework claims to be in every sense the mother school of the numerous branches, sale-rooms, and societies which have followed its lead. It preceded them all; it aroused the taste and style of the day, and continues to originate and to teach.\* The school has published this year a "Handbook of the Art of Embroidery," and lectures have been promised to be given at the school in the course of the coming season.

The school is an association, self-supporting and solvent, in spite of the general depression in trade of the last two years, which sensibly affected its financial prosperity, though the council was never forced to diminish the number of workers. It courts publicity as to the working of its organization, and the council are always grateful for intelligent criticism. The financial department has received much generous help in gifts, and loans from members of the council and other friends, and these form the working fund; the loans will be eventually repaid, and we hope replaced by gradually accumulating working profits which, by the laws of the association, must be entirely placed to the benefit of the school itself, or the objects it had in view at its foundation.

I hope that this necessarily short, and therefore imperfect, statement may yet answer your questions, and justify the claim of the Royal School of Art Needlework to be a teacher and promoter of remunerative women's work, and to be the authority on the art of decorative needlework in the United Kingdom, as successors to the "Broderers' Company" incorporated and patronized by Queen Elizabeth in 1561.

I am tempted to say something as to the claims of needlework to be considered as art. The fact is, that so much weight and interest are now attached to all decorative art that hardly a review or a periodical appears that does not contain an article in which it is discussed. In Germany it has been most learnedly and fully treated by such men as Semper, Bock, and others. They

\* With what measure of artistic success the subjoined letter from Mr. Watts will testify better than any evidence from those connected with the school could do.

have removed the study of archaeology in art from the regions of frivolity and superficiality.

The study of style in even the smaller arts is no longer intended only to help graceful design, and please the eye and protect us from what is ugly or unbecoming. It is forced into the service of the scientific history of civilization. And style as fully asserts itself in embroidery as in architecture or painting. If I may be allowed here to make a few remarks on the embroiderers of the past, I shall perhaps be able to strengthen my plea for the respect due to the efforts we are making to-day.

I have sought for information regarding our own art of embroidery, and I find that Semper gives it high preëminence as to antiquity, making it the foundation and starting-point of all art. He clothes not only *man*, but architecture with the products of the loom and the needle, and deduces from them in succession painting, bas-relief, and sculpture.

In the earliest dawn of civilization the arts were the repositories of the myths and mysteries of national faiths. Embroidery was one of them, and the border which edged the garment of a divinity, and the veil which covered the grave of a loved one, or the flower-buds and fruit which fringed the hangings and curtains in the sanctuary, each had a meaning, and therefore a use. These symbolical designs and forms were constantly reproduced, and all human ingenuity was exercised in reforming, remodeling, and adding perfect grace to the expression of the same idea.

Let us give some instances of symbolical patterns :

The cross was a sign and a pattern in prehistoric art. It was the double of the Tau, the Egyptian emblem of life; and, while the Jews reject the Christian cross, they still claim to have warned off the destroying angel by this sign in blood over the lintels of their doors in the first Passover. The Gamma was the sacred letter of the Greeks, and arranged in different forms had different meanings. In the second form it was called the Gammadion, and under this name was woven into stuffs for ecclesiastical use, as late as the thirteenth century.

Can any invention of man show more intention than the wave-pattern? The airy leap drawn downward by the force of gravitation; controlled, and again made to return, but strong to insist on its own curve of predilection, rushing back under the same circle; strengthened by the downward movement to spring again from its original plane; beginning afresh its Sisyphus labor, and facing the next effort with the same grace and agility. Undying force, and eternal flowing unrest—these are the evident intention of the wave-pattern. There is, near Bologna, an ancient Phœnician

burial-place. Many of the strangely formed tombstones have the wave-pattern roughly carved upon them. It is to be found wherever their universal commercial activity led them. Perhaps the pattern was sacred to the Phœnicians, who were always being borne over the sea, and to whom the wave must have been most familiar and significant.

Needlework has passed through many phases since the aboriginal prehistoric woman with the bone needle, to which we have already alluded, drew together the edges of the skins of animals she had prepared for food.

For absolute necessity, in forming the garment and covering the tent, work need go no further than the seam. This, however, in the woven or plaited material must fray where it is shaped, and become fringed at the edges. Every long seam is a suggestion and every shaped edge a snare. The fringe lends itself to the tassel, and the shaped seam suggests a pattern; upstitches are needful for binding the web, and, before she is aware of it, the worker finds herself adorning, embroidering.

The style of decoration called by the French "primitive" is the earliest known and classed, and is found in all savage attempts at ornament. It consists mainly of straight lines, zigzags, wavy lines, dots, and little disks.

Gold disks of many sizes, and worked with a variety of patterns, are found both in the tombs of Agamemnon at Mycenæ and in Ashantee, and the buttons remind one of those found in Etruscan tombs in design, though the execution is far more advanced and finer. They appear to be the origin of the clavis or nail-headed pattern woven into silks with gold in the palace of the Cæsars. The last survival of this pattern recorded is in materials woven for ecclesiastical purposes in the middle ages.

Of very early art we can only obtain here and there a glimpse by passing allusions in early poetry, illustrated by fragments of early art.

We know not what the actual heroes of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" wore; but we do know that what Homer describes he must have seen. Was Homer, therefore, the contemporary of the siege of Troy? or does he describe the customs and costumes of his own time, and apply them to the traditions of the heroic ages of Greece? Of the uncertain date of Homer himself we can reconstruct the house and the hall, and even furnish them: and clothe the women and the princes, the beggars and the herdsmen, with help from contemporary art.

From the remains of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian art, we can guess at their different styles, and perceive their affinities. Of these it would be difficult to date any very ancient frag-

ments, as there was probably but little change of style in an art which in the East was essentially consecutive and imitative.

The Babylonian and Ninevite embroideries have a masculine look, which suggests the design of an artist and the work of slaves. There is no following out of vague fancies; one set of selected forms, each probably with a symbolical intention, following another. The effect, as seen on the bas-reliefs in the British Museum, is royally gorgeous, and one feels that creatures inferior to monarchs and satraps could never have aspired to such splendors. Probably the embroideries on their garments were executed in gold wire, treated as thread, and taken through the linen, and the same system was carried out in adorning the trappings of the horses and chariots. The solid masses of embroidery may have been afterward subjected to the action of the hammer, which would account for their appearing like jeweler's work in the bas-reliefs.

The corselet given by Amasis, King of Egypt (according to Herodotus), to the temple of Minerva, at Rhodes, was probably worked in this style, for Babylonian embroidery was greatly prized in Egypt, and imitated. The second corselet given by Amasis to the Lacedæmonians was worked in gold and colors, with animals and other decorations. This was in the seventh century B. C. Among the arms painted in the tombs of Rameses at Thebes (in Egypt) is a corselet apparently of rich stuff embroidered in colors with lions and other devices.

The fine linens which the Jews, more than a thousand years before this date, carried with them from Egypt are all gone to decay. We can only judge of this wonderful material from a very few fragments of the wrappings of mummy-cloths, and of their embroidery from some morsels in the museum of Turin and the Louvre; but the hangings of the tabernacle are so carefully described in the book of Exodus that we can see in fancy the linen curtains, blue or white, embroidered in scarlet, blue, purple, and gold; the cherubim in the woven material; the fringes enriched with flowers, buds, fruit, and golden bells.

Deborah sings of "divers colors of needlework on both sides, fit for the necks of those that divide the spoil," as being part of the anticipated plunder which Sisera was to bring home. It is curious that this work, "the same on both sides," still prevails in that part of the East.

It is touching to read of the Babylonian embroidered garment which tempted Achan at the fall of Jericho, and brought such a terrible expiation on himself and all that belonged to him.

David describes the bride as the "king's daughter all glorious within. Her clothing is of

wrought gold. She shall be brought before the king in raiment of needlework." If the bride is really the prophetic type of the visible Church, how truly has she appeared for many centuries adorned with needlework and cloth of gold!

Greek embroideries we can perfectly appreciate by studying Hope's "Costumes of the Ancients," Millingen's works, etc., also the Greek fictile vases in the British Museum. On these are depicted their gods, their heroes, their wars, and their home-life. The worked or woven patterns on their draperies are infinitely varied, and range over several centuries of design—and they are almost always beautiful. It is melancholy to have to confess that in this, as in all their art, the Greek taste is inimitable; yet we may profit by the lessons it teaches us. These are variety without redundancy; grace without affectation; simplicity without poverty; the appropriate, the harmonious, and the serene; rather than that which is painful, astonishing, or awful. These principles were carried into the smallest arts, and we can trace them in the shaping of a cup or the decoration of a mantle as in the frieze of the Parthenon itself.

Homer makes constant mention of the women's work; Penelope's web is oftenest quoted. This was a shroud for her absent lord. Ulysses, however, brought home a large collection of fine embroidered dresses, contributed by his different fair hostesses during his travels.

Pallas Athene, who patronized the craft of the embroiderers in Athens, appeared to Ulysses in the steading of Eumæus the swineherd as "a woman fair and tall, and skillful in splendid handiwork," and Helen gave of her own needlework to Telemachus. "Helen, the fair lady, stood by the coffer wherein were her robes of curious needlework, which she herself had wrought. Then Helen, the fair lady, lifted one, and brought it out; the widest and most beautifully embroidered of all, and it shone like a star," and this she sent as a marriage-gift to his future wife.

The great ladies in Persia did not work themselves, but left it to their slaves—witness the pretty story of Alexander's gift to the family of Darius, with the advice that they should embroider the mantles of Grecian materials. They were much hurt, feeling that it was a suggestion of slavery. When he was aware of this, he said he had intended to do them honor, as the materials had been woven by the women of his own family. We may here mention, while on the subject of Persia, that Lucullus brought back thence, as a part of his pillage, five thousand suits of embroidered and other clothes. Horace says that he gave them to the theatrical wardrobes of Rome.

I suppose there is little doubt that all the



Romans knew or felt of art was borrowed, directly or indirectly, from Greece, first through Etruscan and Phœnician sources, and finally by conquest. Everything we have of their art shows their imitation of Grecian models. Had we any of their embroideries, they would assuredly have shown the same impress.

Greece, herself crushed and demoralized, had to send her artists, as well as her accumulated treasures of art, to Rome; and, even so late as the Eastern Empire, gave her the fashion of the Byzantine taste, which she at once adopted, and called it the Romanesque. This style, which was partly Arab, became European, and still prevails in Russian art, having clung to the Greek Church.

At Ravenna one learns much of the dress of this early Christian period from the mosaics in the churches. The Empress Theodora and her ladies appear to be clothed in Indian materials. These had long been drifting into Europe by the Red Sea. Ezekiel mentions the Indian trade through Aden (500 B. C.). Theodora's dress has a deep border of gold embroidered with Roman warriors pursuing each other with drawn swords. Works enriched with precious stones now appear for the first time, and testify to their Oriental origin.

The next European phase was the Gothic; this is Arab and Moresque, steeped in Northern ideas; and, finding its congenial soil, it grew into the most splendid, thoughtful, and finished style—far transcending anything that it borrowed originally from Eastern or Southern sources.

All these transitions were accompanied by the service of the smaller decorative arts, mosaics, ivories, and jeweler's and smith's work in metals; and last, and not least, splendid embroideries to adorn the altars and vestments of the priests, and the dresses of monarchs and nobles.

When taste was imperfect or declined, then the carvings were rude, and the embroideries likewise; but when all these crafts rose again and added to themselves grace and beauty, by study and by experience, then needlework in England, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, grew and flourished.

Then came the Reformation, which in Germany and England gave a sad blow to the arts which had reserved their best efforts for the Church; and the change of style effected by the Renaissance was not suited to the solemnity of ecclesiastical decoration. The styles of the fifteenth and sixteenth century embroideries adapt themselves better for secular purposes; though their extreme beauty as architectural ornament in Italy reconciles one to their want of religious character, on the principle that it was allowable

to give to the Church all that in its day was brightest and most precious.

The style of those centuries was called sometimes the Arabesque, and sometimes the Grotesque. The fashion was really copied from the excavated palaces and tombs of the best Roman era. Raphael admired them, and caused his pupils to imitate and copy them, and they influenced all decorative art for a considerable period.

Spanish and Portuguese embroideries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are especially fine. Their Renaissance, which went by the name of the *Plâtresque*, is a style apart. The reason of its name is that it seems to have been originally intended for, and is best suited to, the shapes and decoration of gold and silver plate. It is extremely rich and ornate, not so appropriate to architecture as to the smaller arts, and wanting, perhaps, in the simplicity which gives dignity. The style called *Louis-Quatorze*, following on the Renaissance in Germany, England, Spain, Italy, and France, assumed modifications which served to distinguish them, but into which we have not time to enter now. In this style France took the lead, and appropriated it, and rightly named it after the magnificent monarch who fostered it. This was a splendid era, and its furniture and wall-decorations, dress, plate, and books, shine in all the fertile richness and grace of French artistic ingenuity. The new style asserted itself everywhere and remodeled every art, but the long reign of *Louis Quatorze* gave the fashion time to wane and change. Under *Louis XV* the defects increased and the beauties diminished. The fine, heavy borders were broken up into fragmentary forms. All flow and strength were eliminated, and what remained of the *Louis-Quatorze* style became, under its next phase, only remarkable for the sparkling prettiness which is inherent in all French art.

In Italy this sixteenth-century style became what is called the "*Sette-cento*," and was a chastened imitation or appropriation of the Spanish *Plâtresque* and the French *Louis-Quatorze*. In Germany it was a decided heavy copy of both, of which there are splendid examples in the adornment of the German palaces, royal and episcopal. In England was faintly reflected the Continental taste during the reign of Queen Anne and the first Georges, but, except in the upholstery of the family of Chippendale, and one or two palaces, such as Blenheim and Castle Howard, we did not produce much that was original in the style of that day.

Under *Louis XV*, Boucher and Watteau, in France, produced designs that were well suited to tapestries and embroideries. All the heathen gods, with Cupids, garlands, floating ribbons, crowns, and ciphers, were everywhere carved,

gilded, and worked. It was the visible tide of the frivolity in which poor Marie Antoinette was drowned; though before the Revolution she had somewhat simplified the forms of decoration; and straight lines instead of curves, and delicacy rather than splendor, had superseded, at least at court, the last efforts of royal palatial furnishing and taste.

This was followed by the Revolution, and then came the attempt at classical severity (so contrary to the French nature) which the Republic affected. Dress was adorned with embroidered spots and Etruscan borders, and the ladies wore diadems, and tried to be as like as possible to the Greek women painted in fictile art. Napoleon attempted a dress which was supposed to be Roman, at his coronation. Trophies were woven and embroidered; and the honeysuckle, key, and egg-and-anchor patterns were everywhere. With the Empire the classical taste collapsed, and the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman furniture and materials fell to hotels and lodging-houses. In most of the palaces on the Continent an apartment is still to be seen furnished in this style. It was the necessary tribute of flattery to the great conqueror, who in that character inhabited so many of them for a short space. But there was no sign of the style being taken up *con amore* anywhere out of France.

We have reached the middle of the second decade of our own century, and we can not now enter into all the causes that have led to the revival of embroidery in England, and of art in general in its present phase.

It is really a conglomerate of preceding styles, suited to our new archaeological tastes and ideas, in which the antique, the baroc, and the rococo each have a share, and are harmonized apparently by careful colors and neutral forms, which do not assert any especial date of design. But out of these elements possibly a real and accentuated style may be crystallizing around us, without our being conscious of its existence, so that a hundred years hence a genuine work of to-day may be recognizable by an absolute "cachet" of its own.

The Art Committee of the Royal Society of Art Needlework is fully aware of its own responsibilities, and strives to keep and raise a standard which shall assist to guide and inform the decorative tendency of our day.

I remain, dear sir,

Yours truly obliged,

MARIAN ALFORD,

*Vice-President of the Royal School of Art Needlework.*

## II.

DEAR LADY MARIAN: I have been much gratified, and indeed surprised, by what I saw in

your school of needlework at South Kensington. An amount of perfection has been reached which I was by no means prepared for; indeed, it is difficult to imagine how anything of the kind can be better than some representations of plumage and of leafage I saw worked in silk, and in what I think is called crewel.

Needlework, which has been woman's occupation since the days of Penelope, is worthy on its own account of vigorous efforts to preserve its vitality. As one of the best means of carrying taste into household surroundings, it can not be too highly prized; as affording honorable employment to many, whose condition must be a source of great pain to all but the most thoughtless, it takes a place among the important considerations of the time. The necessity to work is far more widely extended than formerly, and every lady knows with what peculiar hardship it falls in many cases. A wide employment in use of needlework would supply a means of relieving pressing need, in a better manner than anything that could be invented. Having executive skill at command, two other things only are wanted—designs and purchasers. Beautiful designs you can always get for money, but it is not so easy to create a demand. It can hardly be expected that an age, which sets so little store by the charm of beauty for its own sake, and fails to perceive practical value in art of any kind, will take much interest in your school, until its practical value can be demonstrated and generally felt. And this will take time: the impulse that will carry you through, and establish your position, must come from the sympathy of those who may be expected, meanwhile, to thoroughly appreciate your objects.

It seems to me that, as it has been, it must be, for at least some time, woman's work: a word of more limited signification may be used—ladies' work, and a work that every lady in the land should take up. All honor to those who have worked so hard, and created a school of such ability!

And now the ladies of England should make it a point of honor to carry the work through. An effort on their part might well be made, and something spared out of what is not seldom employed on things that yield but little real satisfaction—something spared, and devoted in order to encourage a fashion that might become an important agent in our real civilization, while holding out a hand of help to some, among others (though sisters all), whose position in the social scale places them literally within such hand's reach.

This real sympathy is not too much to ask for or expect. Our little life is poor, indeed, if bounded by our own personal requirements and

fancied requirements; and serious reflection enforces the conclusion that, perhaps, what we leave undone is a more weighty matter than what we do. What we do is often the result of misconception, of pressure, of the insanity of excitement, of haste; what we leave undone we have had time to think over and reject. Habitual indifference to the right may be more culpable than hurried plunges into wrong. There are few who would not shrink awe-struck from the certainty of witnessing the end of the world by physical convulsion; few, if it befell, standing on such a brink, who would not regret their best feelings had not been more active; yet, to each the end of the world will surely come: every tick of the clock may be counted as an audible footfall, as step by step we pass on the road. And if, at the end, it should be asked not only what active evil we have done, but whether we have seen any fallen by the way, or drowning, without extending our hands to save, will it go well with us? And before this, if the end of the world come not while we are young, are there not two ways of growing old? Equally inevitable the end: tottering and stumbling, still groping in the ground till we mix with it in the darkness, or rising, as some aeronaut, the world sliding gradually away, leaving us as we still rise with more extended view, while in the grand space the things that seemed so mighty take their relative proportions—towns and cities lose their individuality, and become part of the great whole, and the contention of life, better understood, comes with a confused hum, not altogether unmusical, up in the tranquil atmosphere, free from the impurities of the lower air. Such is the evening of a noble life, like mercy, "twice blessed"—blessed by its own good works, and blessed by the affectionate loyalty of the benefited.

It seems to me not seldom that the evening of our life as a powerful nation comes on apace, and I would that the eyes of younger nations should follow our progress with admiration. This will be, if a great national spirit can be encouraged to animate us all.

In the case of your school, I should have an appeal made to the ladies of England, some earnest reminder how many anxieties may be relieved, how much taste diffused, by a little active but widely-spread coöperation on their part. If the queens of fashion would (as they could do) make the practice of needlework fashionable, everything you strive for would be attained. Of course, you must have the best designs the most accomplished masters can give you; that alone will keep up the character and extend the influence of your institution as a school of art; and it is of paramount importance that your school should be able to show examples of the best that can be

done. But I should like to make a step in a side-direction.

Art, and especially such art, to fulfill its mission, should have a thoroughly natural and home side. She must not always be introduced with a flourish of trumpets by a professor, not always sit in a chair of state, or be treated like a visitor for whom we put on our sedate manners and ceremonious apparel; she must be one of the ordinary household, consulted upon domestic matters, with her sleeves tucked up, busied in the kitchen, and very much at home in the nursery, not merely a friend of the family, but one of the family. This can not be if Puritanic severity be at all times insisted on: a thing may be

" . . . too great and good  
For human nature's daily food ";

and we no more at all times want the perfection of professional art than we at all times want professional music, professional billiards, or professional lawn-tennis. The standard may be raised so high as to render endeavor hopeless, and in this way much of the healthy and recreative essence of art dissipated.

The best, and that which will remain as a landmark for all time, in art and music, must surely be professional, for such production is the work of a life. But taste may be too fastidious and exacting, making at all times demands which should be reserved for certain occasions. To sing and play out of time and tune should not be tolerated, but singing and playing with but little voice and execution will, on fit occasions, and if in good taste, often give very great pleasure.

There is no interest like personal interest, and I should like to see ladies sending, for *their own special use*, their own designs to be worked—"ladies' own (intellectual) materials made up"—not in competition with professional art. Many a lady whose interest is too languid to feel more than a passing pleasure, even in the very best specimens of beautiful work, would find much natural gratification in having her own room beautified by her own designs produced in needlework. If such a fashion could be stimulated, the best results might be expected. Attempts to produce designs with this object, while they would excite liveliness of interest in art-work, would at the same time sharpen observation of natural beauty and variety; and intellectual, interested observation of natural beauty in curves, of graceful combinations of line, which might often be copied without change, might be expected to go far toward correcting errant taste in dress, and supplying for it some definite principles. And, indeed, in designing for needlework, the amateur might often successfully compete with the professor, as in the lighter branches of literature;

the technical knowledge and acquired skill of the painter are not necessary, and taste and fancy have not to contend hopelessly with the difficulties of execution.

In decoration, especially needlework decoration, a moderate amount of artistic acquirement, assisting natural sensibility, might often achieve very satisfactory results. Guided by a few simple rules, many a lady with but the ordinary habit of drawing might find herself producing very graceful designs, which, if not possessing sufficient fiber to bear public criticism, would be very pleasant in her own house. Professors of all kinds incline to look coldly on the amateur element, dreading it as antagonistic to true and severe study. I think, on the contrary, in art especially, it is to be encouraged, creating as it does a lively interest in many, in addition to and not diminishing the earnestness that can only be felt by few.

Before the art of writing was commonly practiced, people went to a professional letter-writer to convey what they had to say. Here I think I perceive some resemblance. The general habit of writing one's own letters has not struck at the root of literature.

A few simple principles may be laid down, such as avoidance of all forms that will not adapt themselves to undulations of surface and change of direction of plane, also all forms that suggest decay, all that makes an appeal to the emotional and intellectual side of our impressions. Such things are out of place on furniture, drapery, etc.; the graceful alone is desirable—those things which are suggestive of youth, and light, and enjoyment. Representations of creations that are

beautiful in form and gorgeous in color, birds, butterflies, beetles, etc., can be worked with very great perfection, and may be rendered with as much or as little actual truth as the occasion may require, to be used in furniture, decoration, or in dress; and it is but reasonable to expect that such application of design and industry would bring about the abolition of the barbarous and abominable practice of destroying myriads of exquisite birds. A whole creation of loveliness is in danger of being swept from off the face of the earth, for the object of sticking stuffed specimens about wearing-apparel, where they are, notwithstanding their supreme beauty, wholly in bad taste, the extreme improbability of the real creature's presence in such places making the effect more grotesque than charming. But, while the appearance of the stuffed bird perched on a lady's muff or entangled in her skirts is absurd or disagreeable, the beautiful and acknowledged imitation could be worn with perfectly good taste, and here should be a most lucrative source of employment, not demanding expensive outlay for designs—shining and beautiful things in thousands which, as acknowledged imitations, would work into dress-ornaments with great effect, and with how much gain! First, the study of the exquisite creation and consequent artistic improvement; secondly, employment given; thirdly, improvement in ornamentation and effect in dress; fourthly, a right direction of expenditure in such matters; and, fifthly (if but occasionally), awakened conscience as to right direction of such expenditure. All this, and more; for, evermore does one habit lead to another, and shape us body and soul.

G. F. WATTS (*Nineteenth Century*).

## ROBERT WYETH.

THERE was something strange and illogical in the friendship that grew up between these two men, something unconformable to known law or principle, if friendships are supposed to conform to laws and principles. It was not similarity of tastes: from the cigar that the one smoked and the other changed sides of the walk to escape its odor, to the masterpiece before which the one shrugged his shoulders and laughed while the other stood in spellbound admiration, there was scarcely an object that called out mutual appreciation. It was not sympathy in experience: from the physical conditions that constructed one man of blood and muscle and the

other of nerves and sensibilities, to the financial conditions that placed the one in idleness and luxury and the other in a precarious struggle for daily bread, there was not a circumstance of life common to both. It was not conformity of opinions: religiously, socially, politically, every idea was antipodal; and yet, from the day when Ralph Inglehart sauntered into the village church—because it rained and he had no umbrella—and, leaning back in the uncushioned pew, had let his eyes turn, at first indifferently, then curiously, upon the face of the young minister in the pulpit, then fell to listening, carelessly, to the sermon in progress, then with growing interest,



till, with fixed eyes and erect in his seat, he was fighting, inch by inch, the argument that struck at the very roots of his complacently established ideas and theories; and from this day, when Robert Wyeth, in the midst of his theme, found his thoughts branching off into a speculative interest in the stranger who had entered his church, and grew conscious, not of embarrassment, but of something like inspiration drawn from the magnetic influence of the darkening gray eyes fixed upon him, from this day a friendship had come between them as a spontaneous existence, entirely rational, as viewed by each, and readily reducible to the comprehensive formula, "I like the man."

Inglehart walked straight up the aisle, while the congregation hurried out, or stopped to gossip, as concern about dinner or interest in acquaintances ruled the hour, and, with extended hand, met the speaker at the foot of the pulpit-steps.

"I like that sermon," was his straightforward, unconventional address. "I dispute every word of it, but it has stirred up more of latent interest in me than I had supposed I possessed. It is good, nowadays, to find a man speaking honestly from his own convictions."

"I consider truth the appropriate article for the pulpit, at least," the other replied, with a half smile, as he accepted the hearty hand-grasp, and let his eyes pass, wonderingly, over the tall, handsome, elegantly dressed stranger standing before him—a man whose years could hardly have equaled his own.

"Truth has to do with fundamental principles; when it comes to the theory of application, opinion is the proper term. You accept the fact and have the mental scope to recognize the existence of other minds. Come and dine with me to-morrow."

"Thank you. Where, and with whom?" the young minister replied, again half smiling, and regarding curiously this stranger, whose abrupt, unconventional speech contrasted queerly with the easy manner, the pleasant voice, and the puzzling smile lurking in the handsome gray eyes.

"I beg pardon," said Inglehart, taking a loose card from his vest-pocket; then, noticing the slight flush with which it was read, he added: "My family will be glad to make your acquaintance. Half-past seven is our hour. Come early. I shall expect you. Excuse me; I'm keeping you from your friends. Good-by."

And, giving his hand the second time, Ralph Inglehart turned and walked down the aisle with his quick, easy step, and disappeared from the church-door.

The group waiting consisted of a middle-aged woman, an invalid, apparently, and unmistakably

the minister's mother, two little girls, and a young lady, whom Inglehart only saw at the back, as his eye rested a moment upon the party observingly. The three latter went out while he was yet speaking.

After pausing to speak a word to the few of the congregation who were waiting, Mr. Wyeth joined his mother, and the two proceeded from the church.

"Who was that gentleman, Robert?" the mother asked, when they had gained the street.

"It was Mr. Inglehart."

"Mr. Inglehart, of Riverside! What led him to speak to you?"

"I have no idea. He spoke a good word for my sermon, and invited me to dine with him to-morrow."

The woman's pale and rather discontented face lighted up with interest.

"It must be, then, that they are intending to patronize our church. You must not neglect this opportunity, Robert; their favor will be well worth the gaining, especially to you," she said, in a half-dictatory, half-anxious tone.

The color came again into the young man's face, as it had come when he read the name on the card, only deeper.

"I do not like that word patronage, mother. If the Ingleharts can gather any good to themselves, ever so little, from coming there, I shall gladly welcome them to receive it; and, if I can say, do, or be anything worthy of their appreciation, I shall be proud to gain it; but I do not want their patronage."

The rain had been but a passing shower. The fresh-washed verdure was brilliant with hanging moisture in the yellow sunlight; then all suddenly darkened. A detached cloud had cast its shadow. The mother, at the moment, had cast a shadow as quick and dark over her son's mental landscape. His theme in the pulpit had carried him with it, away from his own individuality, as it were. Ralph Inglehart had puzzled but not annoyed him; there had been something in the magnetism of the friendly hand-grasp that had drawn him away from the narrowing influence of self-consciousness. He had received the invitation, with no passing thought that it might be intended as a condescending favor to the poor preacher. Perhaps ministers are not expected to think and feel about such things, and of a Sunday; but ministers are human in their pride, unfortunately, as they are fortunately human in their feelings—at least, some are, and Robert Wyeth belonged to the class. His mother did not approve.

"This is a false pride, my son, and you let it stand in the way of your own interest. Of what value is appreciation when it yields you but a beg-

garly stipend that leaves you to be looked down upon for your poverty, even by your own congregation? The family are wealthy, liberal, and refined; at least, this has been said in regard to them; they are not church-people, I dare say, but you need not refuse their influence, so long as it works for good. You should remember our needs, Robert."

She spoke half querulously. Mr. Wyeth's mother was sound in her religious principles, or believed herself to be, but there were plenty of men in the world to become ministers, and she had never been satisfied that her son had not chosen a vocation more lucrative.

"You will not refuse the invitation?" she asked, as her son made no reply.

"No, I have virtually accepted it," was the brief response. Then he began talking of other things, as they walked slowly down the village street.

He never argued with his mother, nor made complaint. She neither understood his feelings nor could sympathize with them, and he did not wish to hurt hers. He had inherited much from this parent—the same nervous, self-conscious disposition that was more the result of a faulty physical organization than of mental weakness. She had yielded to it without effort, and lived an exacting, morbid invalid; he had kept it under subjugation by the stern force of will, and lived a life of self-suppression, and, perhaps, suffered the most.

Ralph Inglehart passed down the street, with his brisk, easy step, then slackened it suddenly, as a thought struck him.

"I've invited a man to dinner, and forgotten to ask his name. The ladies do not approve of my careless habits," he mentally soliloquized, and cast his eye along the peopled sidewalk in search of some pregnable point from which the information might be gained.

The mingled congregations of the three churches of the village were upon the street before him—ladies and children mostly, and heads of families, in company with their wives and little ones. Nearest in advance were two irrepressible youngsters, whom he had wanted to shake a dozen times during the sermon, and who, with their respective volumes of Sunday-school literature converted into weapons offensive and defensive, were engaged in punching and giggling, as only the species can. He was upon the point of interrupting their fun by his question, when a plethoric-looking, red-bearded individual overtook him and fell into his step, at a slight backward diagonal, to take a broad survey before passing.

Inglehart with his genuine good-nature and supreme self-complacency was seldom annoyed by a trifling rudeness. He turned and gave the

man a careless glance, recognized him as the recent occupant of an adjoining pew, and let him come alongside, as the other showed no hesitation in doing.

"A fine shower we've been having," said the man, entering into conversation.

Inglehart admitted all points concerning the weather, then opened his subject of inquiry:

"Your church is fortunate in the possession of no ordinary minister, I infer from the sermon I have just heard."

"Well—yes," the other replied slowly, as if weighing the value of mental reservations. "But it's not my opinion that he will ever come up to his father. John Wyeth was a preacher worth the hearing; though it is to be admitted that the son has disadvantages to work against. Being a new-comer, I suppose you don't know much about the matter, but, you see, his mother married a second time while he was in college—her name is Rayton. The man was somebody she got acquainted with while traveling for her health, as she did most of the time, in those days, and about as worthless an individual as you can well imagine—though the wife never saw a fault in him. They managed, between them, to run through with what property John Wyeth had left, and the result of it is the son has on his hands not only his mother and a pair of twin half-sisters, but also a daughter of his step-father by a first wife. He has supported and educated the girl, and now they say he is going to marry her; which will be a foolish move if he does. You see, the family have always lived hereabout; John Wyeth's charge was at Livingston, a richer congregation than this."

"I struck a lead that time!" was Inglehart's mental comment, as he made the plank crossing an excuse to leave his loquacious companion, not altogether approving of himself for listening to the family matters of the man he had admired. Perhaps curiosity had something to do with his changing sides of the street, inasmuch as it brought the minister's *protégée* and his two half-sisters just in advance of him.

The sisters, a pair of vivacious little creatures, golden-haired, white-robed, as alike as two daisies, turned and looked up at him with the unconcealed curiosity of childhood. Inglehart would have stopped and made their acquaintance if they had been alone; as it was, he looked at their companion with interest. A slender, girlish form, a gray dress, long, jetty curls tied back carelessly with a blue ribbon, were the results of his observations as he approached. His downward glance in passing took in a small, piquant face and a pair of sparkling black eyes that returned no glance in his direction. There was no need. Josie Rayton al-

ready held an inventory of him, exact and complete, from the shade of his eyes to the shape of his city-made boots.

Robert Wyeth had accepted the invitation without realizing what an innovation it was going to be upon the settled course of his daily life. The Ingleharts were entire strangers to him; he barely knew that the family consisted of a mother, son, and daughter, and this was his first meeting with any of the members. Riverside was more than a mile from the village. The location and scenery had, some years before, tempted a gentleman of wealth to purchase a tract of land as a country-seat; but, although the buildings had been completed and the grounds expensively laid out, the place, for some reason, had never been occupied until the year previous to its purchase by the Ingleharts, and this was their first summer there. The village had been pregnant with stories of their wealth and high social standing, and, for once, village rumor had not been without foundation. The family lived mostly within themselves, entertaining their own company, but seemed friendly disposed so far as they came in contact with the village people; and the few more aristocratic families—not Mr. Wyeth's parishioners—who had ventured to call upon them were duly honored and gratified by having their calls returned. But, so far as Robert Wyeth was concerned, up to the moment when Ralph Inglehart met him at the pulpit steps, the family had entered no more into his life, nor had disturbing influence upon thought or feeling, than the social paragons of the few novels he had read.

He thought a good deal about the matter during the following day—thought about it in his study while preparing, as was his wont, the next Sabbath's sermon—always finishing this duty, first and thoroughly, then employing whatever remained of the week to carry on a desultory literary labor that eked out his insufficient income. He thought about it, and, as the afternoon waned, grew to dreading the visit to such a degree that, had his own self-respect not been at stake, he would have gladly found an excuse for remaining away.

Mr. Wyeth held no power to conquer the self-conscious sensitiveness of his nature, but he had the power to prevent it conquering him. He could not govern his own feelings, but he could govern his own conduct. His judgment was established supreme dictator over the least and the greatest of the acts of his life, and his stern, unyielding will lashed every reluctant, cringing impulse into obedience.

He had accepted the invitation under a full conviction that it was intended as a genuine tribute of appreciation, and the conviction stood

the test of his after-judgment in spite of the rush of morbid doubts that had followed. He could not banish the doubts, but he could be guided by the impression which his reason pronounced correct. Morally and intellectually he recognized his own equality, and in teaching and belief he held these qualities as the true governing principles of social distinction. His manhood and self-respect demanded that he should go and meet these people in the independent strength of his own individual worth; his pride dwelt insistently upon the facts that he was accepting a favor for which he could return no corresponding equivalent; that he must meet wealthy hosts, in the elegance of dinner toilets, in his poverty and overworn clerical suit. He condemned the pride as the unworthy impulse, brushed the suit scrupulously, made the best of such appointments of dress as he possessed, and when the hour approached went straight on his way to meet his engagement. But it was with a marked sense of relief that he met Ralph Inglehart at the entrance of the private drive leading to the grounds.

"I estimated you as a man to be relied upon—thought I would stroll down this way and make an early verification of my adeptness at reading character," the young man said, as he approached and shook hands with frank friendliness.

Robert Wyeth instinctively comprehended the action as a piece of tact on the part of his new friend, to save him from the embarrassment of making a formal entrance at the house, and, strange to say, recognized the motive with a sense of gratefulness alloyed by no shade of annoyance that Inglehart should have considered the tact necessary. There was something in the very presence of the young man that carried with it an impression of genuineness that left no room for the feeling. The two walked on together slowly. Conversation came without effort, and with as little mental constraint as if they had grown up from boyhood together—perhaps less; for there were no buried subjects between them.

A party, ladies and gentlemen, were upon the lawn, before the house, engaged in croquet, and Inglehart led the way in that direction. Mr. Wyeth's angle of vision took in the whole group; he saw but one—a lady, taller than the others, and possessing a perfection of form, poise, and movement, that would have distinguished her among hundreds. Mr. Wyeth's eye took in this, took in the sweep and undulations of the rich blue silk, the coiled wealth of blonde hair, and then she turned and came forward to meet them. There was no mistaking her as Ralph Inglehart's sister. The brother was darker, but there

were the same darkening gray eye, the same attractive mouth and smile, and the same ease and elegance in every manner and gesture.

"I have the pleasure, Floy, of making you acquainted with a person of whom you have heard much during the past twenty-four hours.—My sister Florence, Mr. Wyeth," was the brother's introduction.

Miss Inglehart smiled, and gave her hand without reserve.

"Our friendships always go together, Mr. Wyeth. You can not accept the brother's without accepting the sister's," she said.

Mr. Wyeth took the hand without external embarrassment. His inherent self-consciousness had the effect of producing reserve rather than awkwardness; when he spoke or acted at all, he spoke and acted well.

"I trust, Mr. Wyeth, that you do not consider croquet inconsistent with ministerial dignity," she said, after the other introductions had been given.

"Not at all. My little sisters do me the honor to consider me quite an expert," he said, with a smile.

He was not a handsome man—excepting his eyes—but his smile had a radiating effect, as is often the case with one who smiles rarely. She seemed struck by it, and turned to look at him, studiously, as they went to take their places at the game.

Mr. Wyeth was introduced to Mrs. Inglehart in the parlor, half an hour later. Her children resembled her in form and feature, but there was more of stateliness and less of the unconventional freedom that characterized both son and daughter; and there was a suspicion of a more defined pride of caste. But her hospitality was genuine and Arabic. The fact that a person was her guest elevated that person to a dignity worthy of the highest consideration. Whatever distinctions she saw in the world at large, there were no distinctions at her table. Mr. Wyeth's social importance was as great as the young millionaire at his right.

Mr. Wyeth's nature was too keenly susceptible not to feel the influence, but he did not reflect upon it. There was no ostentation, no show of preconsideration to call out thought. He simply forgot himself, almost for the first time in his life. From the moment when he met Ralph Inglehart at the gate to the moment when he made his adieus, the idea of patronage did not once intrude its shadow. The first recurring sense of social disadvantage was when he parted with his friend at the door.

"You will return this favor," he said, but there was a slight hesitancy and a marked interrogation.

"Of course. I shall expect an early invitation. I tell you, man, I've attached myself to you as a friend and brother, and you're not going to find it so easy to shake me off," was the hearty reply that dispelled encroaching doubts.

He did come. At first it was a state affair wrought out through much labor, tribulation, and anxiety of forethought, on the part of the expectant household; then the minister's family grew as accustomed to the informal in-droppings of this self-appointed friend as if he had not belonged to a race looked up to and set apart. He seemed to fit everywhere. The twins appropriated him as their especial property and companion; beat him at croquet, interested him in their dolls, played, rambled, and rode with him, confided to him their thoughts and their secrets, and the family secrets, so far as they were initiated. Inglehart entered entirely into the spirit of their companionship, filled their minds with new ideas and their stomachs with indigestibles, called them Maud and Madge, indiscriminately, with no power of telling which was which, and enjoyed their society quite as much as they did his.

Mrs. Rayton, after the first one or two special efforts, received him languidly in the little darkened parlor, where the most of her waking hours were passed. She found him considerate and sympathetic in speech, manner, and action, but, somehow, forgot to make her headaches, nervous affections, and her special trials, the topic of conversation to the extent that she was in the habit of doing. She did not altogether approve of herself for forgetting.

"I think, every time he comes, that I will say something to interest him in our cause, but some topic of conversation always seems to intrude and absorb my entire thoughts," she said to her step-daughter one day.

"Our cause," ostensibly, meant the church over which her son presided; impliedly, it meant her son's salary; absolutely, it meant her own private comfort.

"The family are Episcopalians, Robert says," said Josie Rayton, suggestively.

"I know it; but the denomination is not represented in our village, and the spirit of common Christianity should prompt them to give their patronage to a church that needs it," she said, with the querulous accent that her family had learned not to contend against.

The friendship of Robert Wyeth and Ralph Inglehart was independent of church, creed, or condition; independent of everything but their own individualities. Inglehart felt a certain interest in the lethargic little congregation, because it was his friend's congregation. He came in sometimes to listen to the sermons he preached to these people, but, as a usual thing, preferred



to take the man's ideas fresh and spontaneous, as suggested by conversation. They talked of everything, from their own experiences to the destiny of the universe; receiving each other's thoughts with keen relish, disagreeing candidly, laughing at each other sometimes, but never arguing. Neither would have eradicated or altered an opinion in the other if he could.

They stood together one evening on the high veranda at Riverside, watching the grandeur of a stormy sunset. The heavy, deep-tinted clouds piled themselves magnificently. The view, more than ordinarily fine at all times, lay before them bathed in floating mists and the golden flood of level sunlight, while opposite, a rainbow, so bright that the woods between were touched by its prismatic tints, spanned the somber mass of rain-charged clouds in the east. The broad, marble-paved hall was flooded by the cross of lights, and the two men had come out more fully to enjoy the scene.

"I wonder, Wyeth, that you did not take to painting instead of preaching," said Inglehart, as his companion drew a deep, quivering sigh of appreciation.

"I have not the genius. Some natures are made to receive, and others to give. Beauty like that seems to touch and permeate every element of my being, but I hold no power to describe or reproduce it—no more than I hold the power of converting into music the principles of sound, though melodies to which I have never listened lie as wholly within my mental conception, as present to my mind's ear, as perhaps they ever were to a Beethoven."

"Have you ever tested the value of education?"

"Is there any *aéronaut* extant that can teach you to fly?"

The other laughed.

"True, one usually holds a fair estimation of his own powers. Well, I don't know but you derive a more perfect enjoyment from it all than if you were endowed with a faculty for laying on pigment and oil in conformity to the fixed laws of light and vision, or of vibrating taut wires according to given rules and principles. You are, at least, saved from the annoying disparity between conception and results."

"That may be; but in one sense the enjoyment embodies only selfishness. It is not my own power of enjoying that I value most, but the power of sharing with others. Nature has but light and vapor wherewith to create the glory of that sunset; but she has created it, and the world can look thereupon and imbibe the inspiration."

"But the world does not look thereupon. The household is devoting itself to dominoes in

the parlor, with no higher idea of Nature's grand effort and achievement than that she has made the grass wet and interfered with croquet. I am in search of a more appreciative community," said Florence Inglehart, who at that moment came to join them.

Robert Wyeth turned and looked at her for a moment, almost as absorbed as he had been in the scene before him. His eye was keenly susceptible to perfection of effects, wherever produced. There were other women—a great many—who possessed more actual beauty, as estimated according to accepted types, than did Florence Inglehart; but there was a grace—a brilliancy and expressiveness—that left no room for the analysis of feature; a grace that communicated itself to every gesture and every appointment of her person—to the floating folds of her gauzy white dress, the fleecy wrap thrown artistically about her shoulders, the spray of flowers at her throat and in her hair; to the simple movement of laying her hand upon the railing before her.

"Speaking of music," said Ralph, after a moment, "Floy hit upon a fragment the other day. Never heard of the composer, but he's gifted with the divine inspiration, whoever he may be. I can't say that the style is to my liking—has a tendency to give one the blues—but Floy was delighted, and I thought of you while she was playing.—Will you not let us have it again, Floy?"

"If Mr. Wyeth desires it, certainly," Miss Inglehart replied, readily, and led the way to a little room—semi-boudoir, semi-conservatory—that held a favorite piano.

The music was a unique combination, wild, sweet, and simple, and Florence Inglehart imbibed the very spirit of it. Words had been set to it, and it seemed especially created for her mellow mezzo-soprano.

Robert Wyeth listened, his eyes fixed upon the singer, and every nerve vibrating. He caught no meaning from the words, he held no power of conscious thought; he simply felt. The woman and the music seemed to blend in working the spell.

"I like to play for you, Mr. Wyeth. It is not enough that one understands music, and can judge correctly of the mechanical execution; I want a listener who can appreciate from my own standpoint of feeling," Miss Inglehart said, as her hand still lingered on the keys. She spoke simply what she thought and felt, with no idea of flattery.

Mr. Wyeth did not speak, he did not dare to trust his voice at the moment. He stood mechanically turning the leaves of her music. His friend glanced at him and came to his rescue.

"There is where I fall short in my sister's sight. It takes a great deal of imagination to get up the proper amount of enthusiasm over these things, and I'm not especially gifted in that direction. She brings her flowers to me: their form and color produce a pleasing picture upon my retina, and their fragrance is gratifying to my olfactive sense; but I don't seem to get hold of the special inflatus that Floy experiences from them."

"O my brother! You have no poetry in your soul."

"I know it; and for that reason I value higher the poetry in other souls. Two transcendentalists never get along well together, unless you and Mr. Wyeth prove the exceptions."

"You disparage us both. Mr. Wyeth and I each lay claim to a large amount of practicality; the only difference is, that he employs his talents and I bury mine.—I heard you just now, Mr. Wyeth, pronounce exclusive enjoyment as selfish. Do you know that touches the source of the one grand dissatisfaction of my life? Some people are circumstanced and endowed to gather the best from life; I feel that it should be transmitted. The diamond is better than the lump of coal only in its power of yielding up that which it has received."

"Do we value ourselves as the precious stones of this earth?" asked Inglehart, eying his sister, half in affection and half in amusement.

"Nonsense, Ralph! I merely introduced a far-fetched illustration. I appeal to Mr. Wyeth for protection from the imputation, and for an elucidation of my sentiment," Florence replied, laughing, and yet with a half-eager look in her eyes.

"I understand and appreciate your feeling, Miss Inglehart; it needs no elucidation," said Mr. Wyeth, gravely. "The nature is narrow that does not feel this need of making its own special endowments a largess to others."

"Yes; but, specifically, what can a woman do? I do not want to peddle tracts, nor go about telling people that they are more wicked or more ignorant than myself. There are plenty to do this, if it needs being done; at least, no such work comprehends my idea."

"Nor the standing in the pulpit and preaching at people. I can not instruct another, Miss Inglehart, in those things which I have failed to learn for myself," the minister replied, with his peculiar half-smile.

She turned toward him to utter some protest, but one of her guests came in at the moment to seek her, and the talk was ended.

"I don't want to discourage you, Wyeth. I dare say you two idealists will hit upon some new order of dispensation, between you, wherein fine

arts and religion shall form a new unity; but, in the mean time, let's try the fresh air and take a smoke—I mean, you take the windward side and let me smoke. The rainbow has been true to its purpose this time," Inglehart added, glancing upward at the widening stretch of softly tinted sky. "The evening is going to be fine; we'll take a boat on the river. You think too much and breathe too little, Wyeth."

One who is on the alert for opportunity generally finds it or makes it. Mrs. Rayton attached a value to the friendship between her son and the Ingleharts, which had extended itself to an acquaintance between the families; it brought diversion, and pleased her social pride. But social pride was not the controlling motive of her invalid life; self-ease stood paramount. She had looked to this acquaintance for something more tangible in the way of benefit, and was fully determined to exert her influence toward the bringing of it into effect. She knew her son well enough to make no further suggestions to him upon the subject; but she did not hesitate to speak her thoughts to her step-daughter.

"Robert holds too exalted ideas of duty; he overlooks those things nearest to him. I believe he would nurse a scruple, and see all of us starve and in tatters." She said this one morning while sitting at her late breakfast, with Josie standing near to wait upon her wants.

"We are living very cozily, mother, neither starving nor in tatters. Robert works late into the nights to buy us more comforts, and sees to everything, and teaches me how to manage, as if he were a woman. You do not appreciate your son," Josie replied, glancing reprovingly at the dainty breakfast, daintily served, the basket of fruit that had been this son's morning present, the luxurious easy-chair that had been purchased in place of the suit of clothes needed.

"I appreciate his disinterestedness, but I can not approve of his persistence in making his life thus hard for himself. It is not his motives that I complain of, but his insistent blindness to the proper means of carrying them into effect," the mother replied, assuming the irritated tone that she always did when opposed.

She did not explain what these proper means were. The door opened at the moment, and Ralph Inglehart was ushered in, each hand appropriated by a laughing, chattering twin sister.

"O mamma!—Josie! Mr. Inglehart has come to take Brother Robert and us to ride, if Brother Robert says yes," was the simultaneous announcement. Then, as the brother entered to welcome his friend, they turned to him for the desired sanction.

Mr. Wyeth placed a hand on each golden head and looked down at them in his quiet, kind-

ly way. He cared for these child sisters with a genuine brotherly affection that never regarded them as burdens upon his generosity; and they returned this affection warmly, with that implicit faith that brought with it something of awe. They never showed the freedom of demonstration in his presence that they did in the presence of his friend, who, only lately, had been a stranger to them.

"Happened in last Sunday, and fancied I detected a trace of morbidness—somewhere about the 'thirdly,' I believe. Thought a ride would do you good," was Inglehart's explanation, speaking with a freedom of jest that always was accepted between the two.

"My state of health, unfortunately, permits me to hear my son but seldom, but I have always apprehended that he would fall into the tendency of which you speak. He gives himself too little rest and recreation to sustain a healthy tone of body or mind," said Mrs. Rayton, setting down her cup and turning toward their visitor.

"I beg pardon—it was not exactly my intention to disparage him to you," said Inglehart, a little taken aback at this literal construction of his speech. "Your son is an honor to the pulpit, Mrs. Rayton, and I hold his talent in high appreciation."

"A man in my son's position can neither do justice to himself nor to others," continued Mrs. Rayton, not allowing Mr. Inglehart's protest to interrupt the thread of her remark. "His congregation not only lack wealth and influence, but are blind to the need of placing a minister independent of the daily burden of living, that he may think and work well for the good of his charge. You can not have failed to observe this, Mr. Inglehart, and my interest in the good of the church, as well as a mother's concern, has led me to hope that you would not refuse to exert a friendly influence in this matter."

Mrs. Rayton was more outspoken in her request, perhaps, than she had intended. With the morbidness of an invalid, she had been dwelling a good deal, of late, upon the circumstances that would not permit of her seeking the benefit of some watering-place, as she had once been in the habit of doing, and her thoughts were already excited upon the subject by the speech between herself and her step-daughter. She had spoken without pausing to consider the inadvisability of introducing the subject in the presence of her son. The look in his eyes and pained flush ought to have arrested her words; but Mrs. Rayton was too self-absorbed in her thoughts and feelings to be sensitive in respect to the feelings of others.

"You are speaking against my wishes and without authority, mother. My church is not a

mission-church, and because I am a minister it does not essentially follow that I am a beggar," Mr. Wyeth said, in a low, stern voice. Then, conscious that he had spoken to his mother in anger, almost for the first time in his life, and conscious of being annoyed beyond the power of concealing it, he turned and left the room and the house, and walked with rapid step down the garden-path.

His mother's only feeling was one of irritation.

"Robert is morbidly sensitive. He encourages in himself an entirely false pride, and a feeling inconsistent with his ministerial position. I trust you will not take exceptions to his words, Mr. Inglehart," she said, by way of apology.

"Most certainly not. But, while I appreciate your anxiety as a mother, Mrs. Rayton, I value your son's friendship too highly to presume to interfere with his pecuniary affairs." Inglehart spoke respectfully and kindly, but yet with a tone and manner that brought to Mrs. Rayton's mind the first doubt concerning the propriety of her speech.

Mr. Inglehart followed his friend from the room, but stopped on the porch, where Josie Rayton was standing. With her quick sensitiveness, and a pride that was not altogether independent of her own special regard for their visitor, she had left the room with burning cheeks, and with tears in her eyes stood picking the convolvulus-blossoms and tearing them into pieces.

"I have a message for you, Miss Rayton—or rather, an invitation," Inglehart said, as he stopped near her. "My sister wishes you to come tomorrow and spend the day with her. There are no guests at the house just at present, and a nice, cozy visit is the special inducement I'm instructed to offer."

Josie turned to him with a quick smile. Her nature was one to change its mood easily.

"I shall be glad to make your sister's acquaintance," she said. "I was out when she called upon us, and have only seen her at the two dinners, and was too afraid of all the people at the one, and too anxious about the pudding at the other, to remember much about anything else."

The speech was neither affectation nor simplicity, but a candid statement, with a sense of the humor in it.

Ralph laughed appreciatively. It could be read in his eyes that this young lady was a good deal of a favorite with him.

"You and my sister are destined to become good friends, I think," he said. "Florence is enthusiastic over you already, and I trust that Mr. Wyeth has instructed you to look with favor upon his friends."

"Robert is very ungallant. He is so absorbed in the greater importance of his masculine friends that he has little room for the consideration of ladies. He never talks about your sister to me," Josie said, as she stooped to tie the sashes of the two little girls, who, with their dolls in their arms, had made their reappearance in readiness for their ride.

Ralph Inglehart looked at her closely—there was an underlying tone that made him do so; but she glanced up at him, at the moment, with a smile, and a remark entirely foreign to the subject. Josie Rayton's face seldom held an expression long enough to be read.

He left her a moment after, and went to seek his friend. Robert Wyeth was standing, leaning upon the garden-gate, with his eyes fixed upon the ground before him. He did not look up as Inglehart approached.

Another man, perhaps, would have sought to save his friend's feelings by ignoring what had occurred; but that was not Ralph Inglehart's way. His nature was too genuine to admit of proscribed subjects. He laid his hand upon the other's shoulder as he came and stood by him.

"You do wrong to feel hurt about this, Wyeth. We know and understand each other too well to be sensitive in respect to each other. Your mother has but imbibed the common spirit of church management—in small places, at least—and the annoyance is peculiar to your position. I would as soon think of the propriety of interfering in your affairs as I would think of the propriety of teaching you the catechism."

Mr. Wyeth laughed—rather nervously.

"I should hardly expect you to misunderstand the nature of our friendship to that extent. But I had rather you would not mention this circumstance to your sister—or any one," he added, speaking from the impulse of the thought that was in him, and pronouncing himself a fool the instant he had spoken.

"Of course not. I hope you do not think I'm habitually in such dearth of conversational material as to repeat such a matter," Inglehart replied; but he scanned his friend's face curiously. "The indistinguishables are eager to be off; are we to have the pleasure of your company?" he asked, after a moment.

"I shall have to be excused this morning. I have some matters to attend to that can not well be set aside. Take Josie and the children," Mr. Wyeth replied, speaking for Josie as if she were a child with the others.

"If you must refuse I shall be most happy to take your substitute, if your sister will consent to the arrangement. I beg your pardon—relationship is confusing in this family. Doesn't it

ever appear to you that you are going to marry your sister, Wyeth?"

"No," the other replied, gravely; "we have never regarded each other in that light. I was a man, and she no longer a child, when we first met. Her father and I were barely acquainted, nothing more. Our common interests and common duties have indicated our marriage rather than an existing relationship."

"Wyeth, you are not a man to marry a wife as a matter of expediency," Inglehart said, with a look in his eyes that was seldom seen there.

"You have no reason to apprehend such a thing, Ralph. I place a high estimation upon Josie's character; I believe that it possesses the elements of true womanhood, and I believe I can do much to promote its growth and development. I look upon our marriage as my best means of securing her future good and happiness, and the future good and happiness of those mutually dependent upon us."

"Well, that sounds sufficient. I'm afraid I shall never be able to find so many good reasons for my matrimonial choice, when the time comes that I shall need them. They will all have to be comprehended under the generalized formula—'I love her,'" was Inglehart's comment, as they turned and walked toward the house.

Josie's day at Riverside proved a day of rare enjoyment. Hers was a nature to enjoy. Her quick perceptions, her easy adaptiveness, her habit of acting true to her own instincts, yielded to her the rare quality of nativeness to any surroundings. She could not do as Florence Inglehart did, and she made no attempt, nor was in any manner troubled. There was an innate, intelligent independence to her character that estimated its own individuality at as high a value as Florence Inglehart could place upon her own. The one would as soon thought of imitation as the other, and would have found it as impossible. Each attracted and interested the other, and, as Ralph Inglehart predicted, they were destined to be good friends.

Mr. Wyeth came after dinner to spend the evening, and with him seemed to come the pervading influence of a different mental atmosphere. When he entered the parlor, the ladies, seated together upon the sofa, and Ralph, taking his comfort in a capacious easy-chair before them, were repeating experiences, and talking vivacious nonsense in highest merriment and abandonment; when conversation again became current it involved, as the somewhat remotely fetched topic, pre-Raphaelite art—suggested naturally enough, it was true, by a work on the subject that Mr. Wyeth had brought, according to promise, for Miss Inglehart's perusal.

Mr. Wyeth possessed no tinge of pedantry.



nor yet a mind exalted above the consideration of minor things, but he was little at home with the small talk and repartee that go to make up the bulk of drawing-room conversation. His mind worked regularly, and to the production of definite ideas; he was silent when among people, or talked on a definite subject.

Ralph, after getting himself into discredit by advancing certain opinions, strikingly peculiar to himself, upon the subject of art in general, withdrew from the room for the declared purpose of smoking a cigar. He returned to find the subject carried into a discussion on the growth of ideas, his sister and friend oblivious in their earnestness, and Josie Rayton seated apart, her eyes fixed upon them, with an intent interest that the topic was hardly calculated to excite.

With a disapproving glance at the absorbed couple, he went over and joined her.

"I suggest that we leave those two enthusiasts to metaphysics, and betake ourselves to the more substantial element of moonshine," was his proposition. "The evening is suited to the superlatives of the poets: suppose we run away to the river. Florence is too afraid of the water to appreciate my new boat to my satisfaction."

Josie looked up at him with a quick, pleased interest, calculated to dispel any present conclusion being formed in her mind, and accepted the invitation without hesitation. Two hours later, when Mr. Wyeth bethought himself that it was getting late, and went out on the veranda in search of the truants, he heard their voices, in laughter and lively talking, as they came up the pathway.

"You should have worn your shawl, child.—Josie is very thoughtless; I can not trust her to your care, Ralph, unless you look after her better," was his remark, as they joined him. Then, with a smile, he said to Florence, as they entered the room:

"Josie and my little sisters find your brother a very entertaining companion. I am unfortunately deficient in his faculty of adaptiveness."

And, in his own mind, the circumstance was placed in precisely the same category as if it had been Maud and Madge that Ralph Inglehart had taken it upon himself to amuse.

Half an hour later, Mr. Wyeth and Josie were walking home together, along the shadowy, hedge-lined roadway leading from Riverside to the village. It was a pleasant walk in the daytime, and pleasant at night when the moon was high to light it. Josie's habit was, not to intrude remarks upon her companion's thoughts, and they went some portion of the way in silence. When Mr. Wyeth came to speak, he disapproved the charge of not talking to her of his friend's sister.

"Miss Inglehart played while you were out. I regretted your absence. You could not have understood the music, perhaps, but its influence would have done you good," he said; then added: "The companionship of such a person as Miss Inglehart is a rare opportunity for you, Josie; you can hardly fail to be instructed and elevated by it."

Josie broke a branch from the hedge, and deprived it of its leaves before she replied.

"I like Mr. Inglehart's sister—I think I love her; but I do not want to look upon her as an instructor. She is too superior and inapproachable; I should grow discouraged and jealous, if I tried to imitate her."

"Jealousy is a narrowing feeling, my child," Mr. Wyeth said, gravely but kindly.

"I know it," Josie replied, laconically, as she broke a second branch and picked its leaves slowly.

"I am afraid, Josie, that you find me a tiresome mentor, at times; but you must remember that growth and development are incumbent upon us as a duty, and essential to our best usefulness and our best happiness," Mr. Wyeth said, in his earnest, kindly way.

Josie dropped the branch, and seemed to stand taller by his side.

"I do not question your judgment, Robert, and I am grateful for all that you have done and will do for me—so grateful, that I would coin every effort of my life into an act for your happiness; but you must not expect me to become as Florence Inglehart. Nature has different types for women, as she has different types for those superb calla lilies by the fountain and my laughing pansies in the garden; and I do not despise my pansies because there are lilies at Riverside," she said, speaking in a slow, quiet tone that was new and strange to her.

Mr. Wyeth looked at her, but did not speak.

"Have I offended you, Robert?"

"Offended me? No, child, you have instructed me, rather. Speak and act according to your best thoughts and impulses, and results will take care of themselves. I did wrong and unkindly to suggest a comparison between you and Miss Inglehart," he replied, with a slight quiver in his tone, that always came if he suspected himself of hurting the feelings of another. And then, as if to make amends, he began to talk of home matters, and of those things wherein Josie had filled a place right well and nobly.

Mr. Wyeth drew no more comparisons; he recognized the difference and accepted it, as he accepted every condition which destiny and duty, or his conception of duty, had shaped for him. He made no attempt to blind himself to the influence that another woman was exerting over

him, nor to the fact that this influence had become the incentive to every new thought, plan, and action, that entered into his daily life. He exalted it, rather, to the highest worth and purity.

"I shall be a better, and possibly a greater, man for having known your sister," he said to Inglehart, one day. "It is human nature to need human appreciation, and it is well for the individual who comes into contact with another who offers a higher standard."

He recognized no injustice to the woman he was to marry. Josie was not set aside. She was the embodiment of his highest duty and obligation, and grew in importance to him, as every obligation grew in importance to him, under the influence of this new motive. He studied harder, worked harder, and tried harder in all things, and, as was naturally to be expected, grew dissatisfied with himself and impatient of results. True to himself, he did not complain of the conditions that restricted his field of action, but complained of himself for not doing better work therein.

It was not his nature to complain or to ask sympathy, and there was but one person in the world of whom he would have asked it. He spoke to Ralph Inglehart one day, walking a part of the way with him in the twilight, for the sake of speaking.

"Ralph, does it never occur to you that I have mistaken my vocation?"

"Well—no. Excepting that you put all of your vitality into your sermons and save little for your personal use," the other said, smiling at the serious tone of the question.

"There is the trouble, Ralph; my sermons and the few special duties commonly set off to ministers, comprise the sum and substance of my whole work. I can preach to people, but I can not lead them. Society is lethargic, selfish, and clannish, and lethargic, selfish, and clannish it remains. I can point neither to influence nor results."

"You expect to accomplish too much, for one thing, Wyeth; for another, you depend too much upon the force of abstract teaching. Motive, example, and emulation enter largely into these things. A man must become, in a certain sense, a social as well as a moral leader, to attain the end that lies in your view."

"That may be. But you know how I am situated, Ralph. I feel at disadvantage with people."

"The disadvantage lies in your own sensitiveness, pride, and egotism, not in the situation."

"I own to everything but the egotism. But it is not criticism that I want to-night, Ralph. I seldom ask human advice or sympathy, but I feel the need of it now; and you are the only person

to whom I care to come. Your sympathy I know I have without the asking, but, in the way of advice, can't you suggest something specific?"

"Ask my sister to marry you."

Robert Wyeth stopped so short in his walk that Inglehart stopped to look at him, and met a face white in the twilight, and a pair of burning eyes.

"Why, man, what is there so terrible about it?" Ralph asked, half laughing, and a good deal disconcerted.

"You have no right to say that to me, Ralph," Mr. Wyeth said, in a low, stern voice, still standing.

"Why have I not?" Ralph asked, quietly, stepping from the path and leaning an arm upon the fence, as his friend showed no disposition to walk farther with him.

"Your sister and I occupy different spheres of existence. I have felt that I would devote the best efforts of my life to gaining her appreciation, but I have never held the shadow of such a thought."

"Spheres of existence"!—Rubbish! whatever you may mean. Listen to me, Wyeth. I know that you are high-strung, transcendental, dyspeptic—or whatever it may be—and I know that pride is the dominant, all-besetting weakness of your nature; and I know, also, that when a man has wrought himself up to meet a life of sacrifice it is hard to cut the tension; but you are not the man, Wyeth, to be governed by these things. My sister comes as near being your ideal woman as any person you will ever be likely to find, and you are the chief among men created, in her eyes—you have my word for that as a friend and gentleman. You are my choice as a brother-in-law, and our mother has spoken of you with favor. You have heard my best advice: I shall expect you to follow it."

"You seem strangely to have forgotten one thing, Ralph. I shall marry Josie Rayton next Christmas," Mr. Wyeth said, crushing the flower he had plucked as he was crushing the temptation rising up within him.

"I object to your marrying Josie Rayton."

"Upon what grounds?"

"Upon the grounds that you love another woman, for one thing."

"If it is love, God knows I am not guilty. Josie shall never know it."

"Josie does know it. Do you think, Robert Wyeth, that you are the only person born to the power of vision—or that others are equally blind with yourself?"

Mr. Wyeth stood, for a moment, silent.

"Then I am more wicked than I ever supposed I should be. I will make my kindness to

Josie my expiation. I will be a good husband to her," he said, with quivering earnestness.

"Robert Wyeth, you will not. You could not have done it, had you never seen my sister. Josie would have married you and devoted her life to you so long as she believed it was for your happiness, but she will not marry you now, you may depend upon it."

"She shall know that it is still for my happiness. Say no more, Ralph. I appreciate your friendship and interest in me, but you can not lead me away from duty," was said, in a low, firm voice.

"You have not listened to my second objection, Wyeth," Inglehart said, quietly.

"Well?"

"I shall ask Josie Rayton to marry me next Christmas."

Mr. Wyeth looked at him for a moment steadily.

"To save me Ralph?"

"No, sir. Because I love her; because she is good enough for me without growth or development; and because she loves me—not with the sisterly affection, gratitude, and reverence that she gives to you, but with the all-excusing love that a wife gives to a husband. I know it looks badly to appropriate the affianced wife of one's best friend, and I would not do it without speaking to you about it; but I have spoken, Wyeth, and I give, in her place, as good a sister as a man ever had, and the woman who loves you, and whom you love. Shall we shake hands, and bid each other God-speed?"

Ralph Inglehart was right. Pride was the all-dominant element of Robert Wyeth's nature. He stood, for one moment, with his eyes fixed upon the eastern gloaming, struggling against it fiercely; the next he turned and extended his hand.

"God bless you, Ralph!"

"God bless you, my brother!"

E. A. REVORG.

## MADAME DE STAËL.

THE present position of Madame de Staël is by no means what it was a generation ago, and it is not likely that her fame will escape that slow process of obscurity by which time quenches so many stars; yet for upward of three quarters of a century she has been accepted as the greatest of literary women, and in her own lifetime she was regarded with a sort of idolatry. The foremost writers of France, Germany, and England were among the warmest of her friends, and there was no one of them who would not have been proud to link his name with hers in the memory of posterity; while the period in which she lived and in which she played a significant and conspicuous part was one of the most interesting in the annals of mankind. In view of these facts, it is in the highest degree surprising that no real biography of this extraordinary woman has ever been written; and still more surprising, perhaps, that the first serious attempt at it has been made by an American.\*

We speak of Dr. Stevens's work as an attempt rather than an achievement, because, though vastly superior to anything that has preceded it, it is not the sort of record that we should expect after the lapse of a generation,

\* Madame de Staël. A Study of her Life and Times: The First Revolution and the First Empire. By Abel Stevens, LL. D. In two volumes, with Portraits. New York: Harper & Brothers.

when time has already settled many things that might well seem doubtful to a contemporary, and when the public looks for temperateness of judgment as well as for thoroughness of treatment. Dr. Stevens's idea of the function of a biographer is very simple. Wherever any one has said or written anything in praise or excuse of Madame de Staël, or in denunciation of her critics, he carefully marks it for citation; and his only further interest in the passage, when he comes to incorporate it with his narrative, is to refute any expressed or implied strictures that it may contain upon her character or work. Not even those who were exposed to the full battery of her fascinations were quite so completely enthralled as this *post-mortem* admirer; and in the hasty communications of mutual friends we find greater sanity and reserve of judgment than in the matured opinions of one whose circumstances would seem to have freed him from the shackles of illusion. We tire at length of the vociferous chorus of adulation, and the mistake of such demands as Dr. Stevens makes upon us is that they defeat their own object. The mind of the reader, repelled by the magnitude of the proposed exactions, refuses even the penny of tribute that is justly due.

In spite of the defect of his point of view, however, the public is indebted to Dr. Stevens for a very readable and instructive work, and for

such a sifting of materials as will greatly simplify the task of any future biographer or critic. It is much more than a mere life of Madame de Staël or survey of her writings. Aside from the strictly biographical facts, it is interesting for its copious personal details about the numerous celebrities that thronged Madame de Staël's *salon* both in Paris and at Coppet. It is a picture of the times in which she lived, with her figure placed, as it should be, in the foreground; and it may be said that, on the whole, few pictures of that stormy and yet brilliant period are more vivid and impressive. Madame de Staël was a "queen of society," as well as the most successful author of her time, and she was involved more or less in all the political turmoils of the epoch; and it required no little skill to do justice to the period without dwarfing the individual actor. Here Dr. Stevens's attitude of adoration was perhaps an advantage—he regards Madame de Staël as a not less noteworthy phenomenon than the French Revolution itself.

This "greatest woman yet produced by Europe" was born at Paris on the 22d of April, 1766, and her parents were worthy of such offspring. Her father, M. Necker, a native of Geneva, was the ablest financier of his time, and might have saved the French monarchy but for the infatuated hostility of the Court to anything like reform until it was thrust upon them by the relentless hand of revolution. Her mother, also of Swiss nativity, is known to us as she whom Gibbon sighed for as a lover but relinquished as a son, and as one of the most cultivated women of a period when women fairly contested with men the palm of intellectual supremacy. At the time of the birth of Anne Louise Germaine Necker (afterward Baronne de Staël-Holstein), her father had about completed the acquisition of his vast private fortune, and was devoting himself to those general financial inquiries which speedily brought upon him the responsibilities of public station. "His accomplished wife," says Dr. Stevens, "shared his ambition, for she could appreciate his competence for its highest aims. Soon after their marriage she opened her house for the reception of the leaders of opinion and society in the capital, proud to have her husband known and tested among them. She became the presiding genius of one of the most influential *salons* at a period when the Parisian *salon* was still a center of power, social, political, and literary—when Madame Geoffrin's circle shone as a constellation of the highest intellects of the metropolis; when the Marquise du Deffand was reigning imperially, in her parties on the Rue Saint-Dominique; and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse had just revolted from the tyranny of the blind old marquise, and had set up her rival *sa-*

*lon*, under the auspices of D'Alembert, drawing with her, by the fascination of her versatile accomplishments and her sapphic enthusiasm, the *savants* and *littérateurs* of the city. The company of Madame Necker's mansion soon included many of the most noted writers of the day—Buffon, Marmontel, Saint-Lambert, Thomas, Duclos, Diderot, La Harpe, D'Alembert, Grimm, Raynal, Delille, Morellet, Gibbon, Hume, not to name a host of marshals, dukes, marquises, and counts. Madame du Deffand herself frequented the *salon* of her new rival, and has left many allusions to it in her letters to Walpole. . . . It was in such times, amid the intellectual provocations and moral perils of the *salon* life of Paris, and the alarming presages of the Revolution, that Madame de Staël spent her girlhood and received her education. 'She was,' as Sainte-Beuve says, 'a daughter of the Revolution.' It made her heroic in character, and left her liberal in her political opinions, and unchanged in her moral convictions."

One of the most interesting chapters of Dr. Stevens's book is that in which he describes the childhood and education of Mademoiselle Necker. She was never sent to school, but was trained under the eye and in accordance with the ideas of her mother, whose former experience as a teacher in Switzerland had given her especial qualifications for such a task. Madame Necker early perceived the extraordinary mental capacity of her daughter, but she could not so readily appreciate those anomalous sensibilities which distinguished her from other children; and she set herself to work, not merely to subdue but to extinguish them, as dangerous indications. Rejecting Rousseau's educational system as materialistic, she "believed it necessary," says Madame Necker de Saussure, "to fill the young head with a great quantity of ideas, persuaded that the intellect becomes indolent without this labor of the memory"; and adopted that "cramming system" which is perhaps least adapted for a child of strong native originality of mind. Says Dr. Stevens:

"Madame Necker's rigor oppressed her daughter. Her daily, her hourly life was under rule, her sports were restrained, her attitudes regulated, her studies severely mechanical. But her ardent nature was ever spontaneously breaking away from this bondage, so foreign to its instincts. She was full of gayety, of *abandon*, of frankness, of affectionate impulses, of the love of dramatic effects—not to say dramatic tricks. Marmontel says that 'she was at times an amiable little mischief-maker.' Bonstetten, in later years her admiring correspondent, says that, as he was walking alone in Necker's garden, he was rudely struck from behind a tree with a switch; turning to resent the blow, he saw the child, then



five or six years old, gleefully wielding the stick. 'Mamma,' she exclaimed, 'wishes me to learn to use my left hand, and you see I am trying to do so.' 'She stood in great awe of her mother,' writes Simond, the traveler, who knew her from her infancy, 'but was exceedingly familiar with and extravagantly fond of her father. Madame Necker had no sooner left the room, one day, after dinner, than the young girl, till then timidly decorous, suddenly seized her napkin, and threw it across the table at the head of her father, and then, flying round to him, hung upon his neck, suffocating all his reproofs by her kisses.' This was nature, rude yet rudely beautiful. Bonstetten tells the story with some variations. According to him, she fairly drew Necker into a dance around the table, and was arrested only by sounds of the returning steps of her mother, when they resumed their seats at the board with the utmost sobriety."

These freaks would seem to indicate that the native propensities of childhood had triumphed over the rigid discipline to which she was subjected; but one who knew her well in later life tells us that she could remember but one trait which bears the character of childhood, and even this showed the dawn of intellect. "She amused herself by making paper kings and queens, and setting them to act scenes of an improvised tragedy. When this entertainment was prohibited by her scrupulous mother, she would conceal herself in order to enjoy it." Quoting again from Dr. Stevens's narrative:

"In her tenth year she was exceedingly attractive. Her natural gaiety was extreme, though at times touched by that poetic melancholy which ever after tinged her soul. Her manners, especially when relieved of the restraints of her mother's presence, were the simple outbursts of her natural sensibilities and frankness. She was fascinating to many of the thinkers who frequented her mother's *salon* and could foresee the luxuriant genius and beauty with which her nature was already unfolding. The Abbé Raynal, the 'Historian of the Indies,' holding her little hand in both of his, would prolong her conversation with wondering interest. Her impromptu remarks already flashed with somewhat of the light with which her conversation, in later years, illuminated the best circles of Paris, Coppet, Weimar, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and London."

A further glimpse of this interesting period is afforded us by Mademoiselle Huber, who was long a member of the Necker household, and who thus describes her first meeting with the brilliant young girl:

"We did not play as children; she immediately asked what were my lessons? If I knew any foreign languages? If I ever went to the theatre? When I replied that I had been there three or four times, she broke forth in exclamations of delight, and promised me that we should frequently go there together,

adding that, on our return, it would be necessary to write out the subjects of the pieces, especially those parts which had most interested us; that this was her habit. 'And then,' she exclaimed, 'we shall write every morning.' We entered the *salon*; by the side of the arm-chair of Madame Necker was a little wooden seat, where she had to sit, obliged to hold herself erect, without support. Scarcely had she taken her place when three or four venerable personages approached her, speaking to her with the kindest interest. One of them, who wore a small round peruke, detained her in a long conversation, talking with her as to a person of twenty-five years. This was the Abbé Raynal; the others were, Marmontel, Thomas, the Marquis of Pesay, and Baron Grimm. We were called to the table; it was a wonder to see how she listened there. She spoke not a word, but seemed to share in all the discussions by the vivid and varying expression of her features. Her eyes followed the looks and movements of each speaker. You could see that she anticipated his ideas. All topics were familiar to her, even those of politics, which were already among the chief subjects of interest in the Parisian *salons*. After dinner many more guests arrived. Each, in approaching Madame Necker, had something to say to her daughter—a compliment or a pleasantry. She always responded, not only with ease, but with grace. Some would entertain themselves in trying to embarrass her, or to excite the young imagination which already displayed so much brilliancy. The men who were most distinguished by their talents were those who hovered most about her, prompting her conversation. They inquired about the books she was reading, reported new ones to her, and inspired her love of study by discussing with her what she knew and what she did not know."

The first symptoms of literary talent exhibited by the young genius were in the composition of those portraits, characters, and *éloges* which were a sort of social literary recreation of the day; and her dramatic tastes were indulged by amateur or "domestic theatricals," which remained with her a life-long passion. In her twelfth year she produced a drama of her own, which was acted by herself and her young companions in the drawing-room at St. Ouen, and which Grimm declared to be superior to many that were actually exhibited upon the stage at the time. At fifteen years of age her faculties showed the maturity usual with cultivated minds at twenty-five; and in 1781, when her father was compelled by court intrigues to retire from office, she wrote him an anonymous letter of such remarkable ability that he detected its authorship by its talent.

Such "mental excesses," however, were not indulged without incurring the natural penalty; and not only was her health seriously impaired, but "her sensibilities began to suffer by this unintermitted tension of her intellect, and we may

trace to this period that poignant sensitiveness to the miseries of human life, that ever-recurring strain of sadness, which characterize nearly all her writings, and which, in spite of wealth, fame, talent, travel, 'troops of friends,' and a career splendidly successful in most respects, rendered her life a continuous scene of restlessness, if not of melancholy, and led her to say, on her death-bed, that but one of the capabilities of her nature had been developed to its utmost—the capability of suffering." Her faculties, of mind as well as body, began to yield under the excessive stimulation to which she was subjected; but, fortunately, the great physician Tronchin was consulted in time, and he prescribed life in the open air, and ordered the immediate and total suspension of all serious studies. Under this regimen, her naturally vigorous constitution speedily reasserted itself, "her native vivacity burst into full liberty"; roaming the woods from morning till night, her remarkable faculty of picturesque description was fed and developed, "and her imagination, so splendid in its later disciplined power, and one of the richest charms of her works, now flowered healthfully amid natural scenes."

The cure was perfected, and her emancipation rendered complete, by a season of travel which M. Necker, released from the cares of office, entered upon in 1784, and which gave his daughter her first glimpse of that Switzerland which was thereafter a sort of native country to her. Returning to Paris in 1785, after a tour through southern France, Mademoiselle Necker began to turn her attention more seriously to literature, and in 1786 she completed a drama in verse, in three acts, entitled "Sophia, or Secret Sentiments." The next year she attempted a more ambitious flight, and composed her tragedy of "Jane Grey," in the customary five acts, a few copies of which were printed, three years later, for private distribution. Before she was twenty she had also written three tales; and, in her twenty-third year, she wrote a "Eulogy on M. de Guibert," which was regarded as a conclusive evidence of her genius for literature.

The early womanhood of such a character must necessarily possess a peculiar attraction, and Dr. Stevens lingers over it in a chapter which he has evidently written *con amore*. Of her personal appearance he says:

"In her eighteenth year she is described as 'so mature a woman that they could justly pronounce her to be one of the most luminous spirits of the times; she eclipsed all who came near her, and seemed rightfully the mistress of the house.' The same authority, speaking of her appearance in her twentieth year, says: 'Her figure was admirable; her shoulders, her bust, her arms and hands, were of rare beauty; she had in her mien and her feat-

ures all that poetry of soul which she afterward displayed in her writings. Without being beautiful, she was already the model after which Gerard painted his Corinne twenty years later, having the same richness of form and health, the same purity of lines—those contours, powerfully rounded, which express a poetic organization.' Young as she was (in 1788), 'she had a very powerful fascination, felt by all who approached her.' Her cousin says that she was graceful in all her movements; her countenance, without entirely satisfying the eye at first, attracted it, and then retained it, by a rare charm, for it quickly displayed a sort of ideal or intellectual beauty. No one feature was salient enough to determine, in advance, her character or mood, except her eyes, which were truly magnificent; but her varying thoughts painted themselves in ever-varying expression on her face. It had, therefore, no one permanent expression; her physiognomy was, so to speak, created by the emotion of the moment. In repose, her eyelids had something like languor, but a flash of thought would illuminate her glances with a sudden fire, a sort of lightning forerunning her words. There was, however, no unquiet mobility about her features; a kind of exterior indolence characterized her; but her vigorous frame, her firm and well-adjusted attitudes, added to the great force and singular directness of her discourse. There was, meanwhile, something dramatic in her bearing; and even her toilet, though exempt from all exaggerations, gave an idea of the picturesque more than of the mode or fashion.

"Some of those negligent caprices, or eccentricities, usually attributed to persons of genius, were reported of her about this period. It is said that, at her presentation at court, the courtiers, who were familiar with her reputation, amused themselves over a fault in her 'courtesy and a slight derangement of her robe'; and, in a visit a few days later, to the Duchesse de Polignac, a confidant of the Queen, 'she forgot her bonnet, leaving it in the carriage.' The feminine gentlemen and masculine ladies of the court, envious of her rising fame, found occasion for self-complacent criticism, for rebuke and sarcasm, in such barbarous defects. She herself repeated these reports to her friends with equal self-complacency."

Throughout her life, her liking for conversation was one of her most characteristic traits, and her preëminence in it was quite as marked as in literature:

"Society, conversation, were a necessity of her nature; she needed distraction, for a certain pensiveness, not to say melancholy, hung continually about her; it was mitigated by years, but was never totally dispelled. It was a powerful element of her genius, and gave rich poetic coloring to her writings. She usually retired from company, in which she had conversed much, with sensible relief. 'This relief,' says her cousin, 'was necessary to her very being. The conservative instinct of her talents repelled dullness or depression. Perhaps her constitution,

more sensitive than was supposed, required the stimulus of diversion; for a sort of terror seized her at the thought of the stagnation of existence. In her youth she could not endure solitude; and the melancholy impressions, which are painted with so much beauty in her works, were with her formidable realities. It was only very late in life, when she was able to hold in abeyance the phantoms created by her imagination, that she could, according to her own expression, 'live in society with nature'; consequently *ennui*, which in society or elsewhere is a solitude in which one has not even his normal self for company, was extremely dreaded by her. It sufficed not that her associates were intellectual, they must be animated. She could not be content if they spoke without interest. 'How can they expect me to listen,' she said, 'if they do not themselves the honor to listen to themselves?' She could endure better certain defects of character or manner, than heartlessness, or a lack of interest in the speaker. She said, one day, of an egotist, 'He speaks indeed only of himself, but this does not oppress me, for I am sure that he is at least interested in what he says.' She delighted in humor, though there is hardly a trace of it in her own writings, except one or two of her domestic dramas. She showed a sort of tenderness, a lively gratitude, for those who cheered her by their conversation. A *bon mot*, a comic story, a brilliant epigram, charmed her. Piquancy, originality, imagination—these pleased her above all else; they gave spring to her mind, wings to her genius. A single marked trait or talent was more valued by her than any combination of mediocre qualities, however numerous.

"Talent in others always prompted her own. She was never dispirited in conversation by the brilliancy of competitors; but, with a simple candor, a charming *abandon*, she gave herself up to the inspiration of their powers, and shone the brighter for the combination of their light with hers. This simplicity, this utter frankness, was an infinite charm; never has the etymological significance of the word sincerity had a finer exemplification. Hence her self-reliance never appeared like egotism; it was perfect, and yet apparently without self-consciousness, like that of the ascending lark, which doubts not its power of wing because it thinks not of it. She had no reason to fear rivals in conversation; her superiority there was supreme. 'This illustrious woman,' says a good authority, 'personified the eloquence of conversation in the country where that brilliant gift was the most fully appreciated.'"

Of course, in a country like France, the marriage of one of the richest heiresses of Europe, the daughter of a minister of state, was a matter of some consequence and no little difficulty. The difficulty in Mademoiselle Necker's case was increased by her mother's determination that she should not marry a Roman Catholic, and by her own determination not to marry any one who would separate her from her parents, to whom she was passionately attached. The difficulties

were compromised at last by their acceptance of Eric Magnus, Baron de Staël-Holstein, a Swede and a Protestant, a favorite at the Court of Versailles, a man of polished manners and of good official prospects. The alliance was not a precipitate one: the negotiations for it extended through several years. Through the personal intervention of Queen Marie Antoinette, the King of Sweden was induced to appoint Staël ambassador at the Court of France, and to guarantee the position to him for twelve years, with a pension of twenty-five thousand livres per annum in case, "by circumstances unforeseen, M. de Staël should lose his ambassadorship." The marriage took place on the 14th of January, 1786, Staël being in his thirty-seventh and his bride in her twentieth year. It appears to have been purely an affair of the *convenances*, with no pretension to love on either side; and, as the Baron scarcely figures at all in any record of Madame de Staël's life, we may close our account with him here. After living with him until about 1799, during which time three children were born, she separated herself from him "in order to save the fortune of her children," and in 1802 he died, while she was conveying him to Coppet to nurse him in his illness.

Under the auspices of the new ambassadress the *salon* of the Swedish legation became the most brilliant of all the diplomatic *salons* of Paris, and the relations of Madame de Staël with the court were of the most intimate and cordial character. In 1788 her "Letters on the Writings and Character of Rousseau" were printed for private circulation, and in the following year were published to the world, achieving a success that seemed to settle the fact of her vocation to literature. This vocation she was prepared to enter upon with eagerness, but the opening scenes of that great catastrophe, the French Revolution, were now at hand, and she took a peculiar interest in them because of the prominent part played by her father, M. Necker. His dismissal "overwhelmed her with agitation and dismay," and his triumphant return, when the King discovered that he could not get along without him, was described by herself long afterward as the most vivid impression of her life. His final retirement, after failing in his attempt to stem the torrent of revolution, left her with no desire but to escape from Paris and accompany him to his retreat at Coppet.

Dr. Stevens's pictures of the revolutionary period are remarkably vivid, and are painted from a point of view at once novel and suggestive; but we have not time to pause over them. Madame de Staël entered with considerable ardor into the popular aspirations for liberty, and ever afterward declared herself a republican;

but as the Terror approached, she, like every one else who had had the misfortune to achieve eminence, was compelled to seek safety in flight. Her position as ambassadress would have protected her, but she had made such heroic efforts to shield and rescue her friends that she had become "suspect," and finally, in attempting to leave Paris, very nearly lost her life. "She escaped," says Dr. Stevens, "out of the very vortex of the revolution"; and few even among those who weathered the storms of that frightful period had a narrower or more fortunate escape.

Peacefully sheltered in the château at Coppet, Madame de Staël became the "priestess of its abundant hospitalities," and watched from afar the tempest of revolution that was sweeping over France, anxious only to mitigate its horrors, so far as lay in her power. From Lacretelle, the historian, Dr. Stevens quotes the following fine tribute:

"While blood flowed in torrents in Paris and other cities, who dared to gather and conceal for long periods the innumerable proscribed persons of the 10th of August, and associated themselves with their fate?—Never is woman more beautiful than when she accomplishes a good and great action. Behold Madame de Staël watching, from the 10th of August even to the days of September, over the illustrious men, conquered on the 10th—Narbonne, Montmorency, Jaucourt, and many others. Both her genius and her fortune are consecrated to friendship and pity. Even in the château at Coppet, crowded by the friends whom she has saved, she watches still over those who remain in the gulf. She knows certain asylums for them, and sends guides to lead them across France, through the continuous lines of the revolutionary committees. She, who had elevated herself to an intellectual height known to few men, studied now but one art—that of achieving, against crime, the most noble and most salutary of contraband acts. Coppet becomes a common asylum for *émigrés*, voluntary and involuntary. Neither she nor her father cares for opinions in the presence of misfortune. Ah! history is not large enough for the full commemoration of such hospitable devotion."

Early in 1793 Madame de Staël made a visit to England, and, taking an elegant house called Juniper Hall, at Mickleham, Surrey, gathered around her a congenial circle of friends from among the refugees who had fled from the Terror, including Talleyrand, Montmorency, Narbonne, Lally-Tollendal, the Duke de Guignes, the Princesse de Poix, and others. They formed a circle distinguished by culture as well as social rank, and contrived to alleviate their exile by dramatic readings and other literary entertainments, by their brilliant conversations, by rides amid the scenery of the vicinity, and by visits to

and from the neighboring gentry. One of the most interesting passages in Dr. Stevens's book refers to this episode in his heroine's life:

"Madame de Staël is the cynosure of these *conversations*. If Talleyrand excels all in *bons mots* and epigrams, she dazzles all by the splendid variety and happy pertinence of her ideas, the richness of her style, and the generous enthusiasm of her sentiments. At one time she thrills the company by her passionate recitation of a tragedy; at another she entertains them, and particularly commands the applause of Talleyrand, by reading the first chapter of her work on the 'Influence of the Passions on the Happiness of Individuals and of Nations,' one of her most elaborate productions, to which she now devoted occasional hours, but which was not published till 1796. 'She read,' writes Mrs. Phillips, 'the noble tragedy of "Tancred," till she blinded us all around. She is the most charming person, to use her own phrase, that never I saw.' Though usually a very effective reader, she could not escape occasional criticism from Talleyrand. 'Madame de Staël was very gay and Talleyrand very comic this evening; he criticised, among other things, her reading of prose, with great *sang-froid*. "You read prose very badly," he said; "you have a sing-song tone in reading—a cadence, and also a monotony which is not good at all; one always believes that you are reading verse, and that has a very bad effect." They talked over a number of their friends and acquaintances with the utmost unreserve, and sometimes with the most comic humor imaginable—Lally, Lafayette, the Princesse d'Henin, the Princesse de Poix, and Guibert, who was, Madame de Staël told me, passionately in love with her before she married—and innumerable others.' D'Arblay employs his leisure in copying, for her, her essay on the passions. Lally reads to them his own tragedy on the 'Death of Strafford'; but the company, though they have come, from actual scenes the most tragic in the history of the world, are not predisposed to melancholy sentimentality; they amuse themselves at the contrast between the lachrymose style of the drama and the violent gesticulation and Falstaffian corpulence of its author. French gayety predominates in their circle. Poverty itself can not damp their national vivacity.

"They are compelled to economize; most of them have lost their all in the wreck of their country; and those who, like Narbonne and Madame de Staël, retain ample resources, are embarrassed by the difficulties which attend the remittance of their funds. The few that have any means share them with the many who have none. They are content with one small carriage, which they have bought for their drives in the beautiful scenery of Surrey. It can hold but two persons. Talleyrand and Narbonne gayly take their turns to ride behind as footmen; and, breaking the glass from the back of the vehicle, keep up the liveliest conversation with its inmates. Madame de Staël assures us that she never heard more brilliant talk than in these gay excursions. Penury had become honorable among the



*émigrés*, not only at Mickleham, but in all their English resorts; for many of them who had been in the highest social positions of France were its victims abroad. Dutens, who, by his long connection with the diplomatic service of England, was more an Englishman than a Frenchman, witnessed their exemplary sufferings with admiration. 'They were not ashamed,' he says, 'to be poor, though they had to do their utmost to save themselves from want. I saw women of the highest condition and greatest name submit to their necessary work, and gentlemen devote themselves to various labors, and never thereby lose the elevation of their sentiments.'

In the summer of 1793, Madame de Staël returned to Coppet, in time to close the eyes of her dying mother, and then proceeded to Paris. After the fall of Robespierre, in spite of the agitations that continued to be rife there, the metropolis had irresistible attractions for her; and, her husband having been reinstated in his official position, he could guarantee her safety. The reopening of her *salon* was a restoration of the best ante-revolutionary society; one of the highest authorities says that "she reappeared in France and founded there anew the spirit of society." With characteristic magnanimity, her earliest efforts were directed to securing the removal of proscriptions from her emigrant friends, and among others Talleyrand, then in America, owed his recall to her. So zealous and successful were her solicitations in this regard that at length a "man of the people" denounced her from the tribune; she was accused of sympathy with conspirators, and had to seek safety in flight and temporary concealment. "While devoting herself," says Dr. Stevens, "to beneficent and hazardous services for her friends in Paris, two important tasks occupied her leisure: one was the education of her son, the other the composition of her work on 'The Influence of the Passions.'" This treatise, prompted by the terrors of the Revolution, appeared in 1796, and, though now forgotten, was at the time considered a remarkable production to have come from the pen of a woman.

In Dr. Stevens's work, as well as in all other biographies of Madame de Staël, much attention is given to her relations to Napoleon, whom she began by admiring, and ended by defying. It is customary to represent her as a heroine and a martyr, the victim of a ruthless oppressor, and the solitary witness for liberty in a prostrate and humbled Europe; and from Dr. Stevens one would get the impression that, amid the cares of empire and the tragedy of battle, Napoleon devoted a considerable portion of his time and ingenuity to alternately conciliating and persecuting this "helpless" and "anguished" woman. Now, there is something noble, no doubt, in the refusal

of Madame de Staël to join the throng engaged in offering incense at the conqueror's shrine, and something at once touching and impressive in the fortitude with which, through long years, she maintained her attitude of resistance; but it must be remembered that very few women or men have ever been placed by circumstances in so independent a position, and that, after all, her "sufferings" were of a highly sentimental character. It needs to be pointed out, moreover, that the constant talk about Napoleon's "persecution" of Madame de Staël is simply absurd. Women, like men, must accept the consequences of the position they have made for themselves; and the "prodigious" influence upon opinion, which Madame de Staël's biographers unite in claiming for her, constitutes the excuse, if not the vindication, of Napoleon's conduct toward her. It should be said, too, that her own work ("Ten Years of Exile") shows plainly that the wounded vanity which produced the early antagonism between her and Bonaparte was on her side rather than on his. Dr. Stevens selects only such passages as tend to confirm his view; but even these can not disguise the chagrin with which the "queen of society" saw the "conqueror of Italy" declining to render that "homage to genius" which she had been accustomed to receive from all who approached her. In one of the most characteristic passages of the book we have mentioned, she tells how, "when invited to a party at General Berthier's, where the First Consul was to be, I wrote down a number of tart and poignant replies to what he might have to say. Had he chosen to insult me, it would have shown a want both of character and understanding to have been taken by surprise; and, as no one could be sure of being unembarrassed in the presence of such a man, I prepared myself to brave him. Fortunately, the precaution was unnecessary; he only addressed the most common questions to me." It is hard to resist a smile at this; and Napoleon himself has enlightened us as to what she probably regarded as "insults." While at St. Helena, he told Las Cases that, "prompted by her vanity, and expecting a flattering answer, Madame de Staël once asked him 'whom he considered the greatest woman in the world, living or dead?' 'Her, madame,' I replied, 'who has borne the most children.' She was disconcerted, and remarked that I 'was reported not to be a great admirer of the fair sex.' 'I am very fond of my wife,' I replied, and abruptly turned away."

The truth is that Madame de Staël confronted Napoleon with a vanity and self-esteem equal to his own, and it was unbecoming in either to complain of the natural consequences. Napoleon contented himself, in general, with protecting his schemes against the possible results of her con-

versational eloquence and social influence; but Madame de Staël made Europe resound with the story of her wrongs—deriving, we can not help thinking, a good deal of satisfaction from the *éclat* which Napoleon's "persecution" gave her. Byron seldom exhibited his insight into character more strikingly than when he wrote of her (in a passage whose cynicism shocks Dr. Stevens), "She can not exist without a grievance, and somebody to see or read how much grief becomes her."

Whatever its origin, however, it can not be denied that Napoleon's hostility toward Madame de Staël profoundly influenced her destiny. For a time there was almost a rivalry between them, and she became the social leader of the Constitutional party, whose chief purpose was to thwart the ambitious designs of the First Consul. Says Dr. Stevens:

"The *salon* of Madame de Staël was thronged by the best intellects of Paris—by men of letters, by foreign diplomatists, by members of the Legislature; even the brothers of Napoleon were among her habitual guests, for Lucien and Joseph were proud of her friendship. The brilliant Sophie Gay, her literary contemporary, but never her rival, has given the first place to her reunions, in a work on the 'Salons Célèbres,' devoting forty pages to her. 'Garat, Andrieux, Daunou, and Constant, inspired by her enthusiasm, endeavored to save liberty in the Legislature. The most eloquent of the republican orators were those who borrowed from her most of their ideas and telling phrases. Most of them went forth from her door with speeches ready for the next day, and with resolution to pronounce them—a courage which was also derived from her.' 'Her *salon*, at this period, was composed not only of the chiefs of the Opposition, but one saw there many persons who were attached to the Government—the brothers of the First Consul, the ministers, etc. Journalists were there to find news; Talma and Gerard sought inspiration there; returned *émigrés* bore there the exquisite politeness of the *ancien régime*; the Duke Mathieu de Montmorency could utter there the religious sentiments which characterized his pure and charitable soul; the Duke Adrien de Laval could maintain there his fine *esprit*, the delicacy and grace of his noble and simple manners; the Count Louis de Narbonne, the courtly traditions and flatteries which, later, endeared him so much to Napoleon; the Chevalier de Boufflers enchanted the company by his piquant recitals, his fine sarcasm, seconded by the brilliant repartees of M. de Chauvelin; the Count de Sabran gave there proof of that eminent intellect and generous heart by which he afterward consoled the exile of Madame de Staël. These remnants of the *ancien régime* mingled there freely with the best minds born of the Revolution—Ducis, Chenier, Lemercier, Arnaud, Legouvé, Talleyrand, Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angely, Camille Jordan, Andrieux, Constant, etc. Their differences of opinion gave way to

the necessity felt for conversation and mutual sympathy."

At length her *salon* became so obviously the headquarters of the disaffected as to excite Bonaparte's suspicions, and she received intimations which caused her to retire to Coppet, where her father was about to publish a work ("Last Views," etc.) which still further aroused the ire of the First Consul, whose projects it exposed. Here she composed her story of "Delphine" (published in 1802); and about the same time she began that study of German literature which afterward culminated in her greatest work, the "Allemagne." Publishing her book at Geneva, she remained there and at Coppet during the winter of 1802-'3, gathering around her a society which surpassed both in numbers and celebrity the famous circle which in the previous generation had clustered around Voltaire in his neighboring retreat of Ferney. "Its greatest days," says Dr. Stevens, "were yet to come; but Coppet was already rising before the eyes of all Europe, not only as a refuge for the persecuted, but as an intellectual Pharos. Its discussions, political, philosophic, literary, conducted with the highest conversational talent of the times, began usually before eleven o'clock in the morning, at the breakfast-table, were resumed at dinner, were continued till supper at eleven o'clock at night, and often did not end till after midnight. Manuscript works were read, and the best poems of various languages recited, as well as dramas acted by the guests."

The château, indeed, became a little world of its own; but the *châtelaine* still longed for the great world of Paris, and in the autumn of 1803, thinking that Napoleon was too much absorbed in his preparations against England to notice her movements, she ventured to the vicinity of the capital and hired a small house, hoping to be able to spend the winter there. But it happened to be especially important to Napoleon at this time that there should be no rallying-point for the disaffected at the capital; and, as soon as he was apprised of her return, he wrote her a letter exiling her to forty leagues from Paris, and requiring her to depart within twenty-four hours.

A partial mitigation of this order was obtained; but on the question of her residence in Paris Napoleon was inexorable, and, reluctant to return at once to Coppet, she determined on a visit to Germany. There her tour was almost a triumphal progress. At Weimar she formed the acquaintance of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, the Schlegels, and others, and at Berlin of the royal family, who treated her with distinguished honor. Before leaving Weimar she had conceived the design of her "Allemagne," and immediately began to study "the new philosophical and æsthetic

systems of Kant, Schelling, Schlegel, etc." From Berlin she went to Vienna, but in the spring of 1804 she was recalled to Coppet by the illness of her father, whom she passionately loved, and whose death so depressed her health and spirits that in the following winter she sought relief in that memorable journey to Italy which resulted in her most popular and best-known work, the story of "Corinne."

The death of M. Necker left Madame de Staël sole mistress of an immense fortune, which she used in dispensing a truly regal hospitality. Never, perhaps, has a more brilliant circle been brought together than that which "Corinne" (as she was now called) gathered around her year after year at Coppet; and the most interesting chapters in Dr. Stevens's book are those in which he describes the life there.

"Its attractions were now greater than ever. Its hostess was in improved health and spirits; her fame was European; her *salon* was crowded; the highest subjects were discussed there daily; and music and dramatic performances relieved the graver occupations of the company. In a letter to the Duchess Louise of Weimar, she writes (October 13, 1807), 'I shall remain here a month longer; the Prince Augustus of Prussia is still with us. He is about to leave, after spending six weeks here. We have acted tragedies during this period—Madame Récamiér, Benjamin Constant, and M. de Sabran taking parts. Benjamin is preparing a piece for the Théâtre Français, on the death of Wallenstein; he has written three admirable acts. We wish to play it on our theatre before our company disperses; then I will depart. Constant will go to Paris to try his drama. It is possible I may commence my journey by the south of Germany, and not reach you till spring.' The niece and adopted daughter of Madame Récamiér tells us that Madame de Staël had a passion for the drama, and could throw into her performance 'soul and fire.' 'Though not beautiful, she had a good figure, beautiful arms and hands and magnificent eyes; these were advantages on the stage.' They played Racine's 'Phèdre.' 'The illustrious *châtelaine* herself took the part of the heroine; she claimed her beautiful and timid friend, Madame Récamiér, for that of *Aricie*, Benjamin Constant was *Theseus*, and Count Sabran was *Hippolytus*. These amusements attracted to Coppet a crowd of curious, critical, and satirical spectators. Imagine Benjamin Constant, with his red hair, his pale blue eyes impaired by his use of glasses, and his gawky German-student appearance, personating the heroic vanquisher of the Minotaur! The Count de Sabran was equally inapt. But these representations amused Madame de Staël."

Madame le Brun, the artist, traveled in Switzerland in 1808 and 1809, and spent some time at Coppet, greatly enjoying its society, and making one of the most noted portraits of the au-

thoress. In a letter to the Countess Potocka, she writes:

"I have passed a week with Madame de Staël, and have read her last romance, 'Corinne, ou Italie.' Her face so animated and so full of genius has given me the idea of representing her as Corinne seated on a rock with a lyre in her hand. I paint her in antique costume. She is not beautiful, but the animation of her visage takes the place of beauty. To aid the expression I wished to give her, I entreated her to recite tragic verses while I painted. She declaimed passages from Corneille and Racine. I propose to take the portrait to Paris and there give it the last touches. I find many persons established at Coppet: the beautiful Madame Récamiér, the Count de Sabran, a young Englishwoman, Benjamin Constant, etc. Its society is continually renewed. They come to visit the illustrious exile who is pursued by the rancor of the emperor. Her two sons are now with her under the instruction of the German scholar Schlegel; her daughter is very beautiful, and has a passionate love of study. Madame de Staël receives with grace and without affectation; she leaves her company free all the morning; but they unite in the evening. It is only after dinner that they can converse with her. She then walks in her *salon*, holding in her hand a little green branch; and her words have an ardor quite peculiar to her; it is impossible to interrupt her. At these times she produces on one the effect of an improvisatrice. I have seen 'Semiramis' played at Coppet. Madame de Staël acted as *Azema*; she was very successful in some passages of this rôle, but her acting was unequal. Madame Récamiér, her friend, nearly died with fear in her part of *Semiramis*; M. de Sabran was not too much at home in his rôle of *Arsace*. I have always observed that comedies and proverbs can be tolerably well played in society, but never tragedies."

Still another characteristic glimpse is afforded us by Baron Voght, who visited Coppet in the autumn of 1810. Writing to Madame Récamiér, he says:

"The life which is led at Coppet agrees perfectly with me; its society still more. I love the wit of Constant, the erudition of Schlegel, the amiability of Sabran, the talent and character of Sismondi, the simplicity, truthfulness, and intellectual soundness of Auguste the son, and the *spirituelle* gentleness of Albertine the daughter. I must not forget Bonstetten; good, excellent, full of varied knowledge—so facile in mind and character, so rich in all that inspires esteem and confidence. Your great friend animates and enlivens all around her, and imparts mind to all. In every corner some one is at work on some intellectual task. Corinne herself writes her delicious 'Letters on Germany'; this will doubtless be her best work. She is also finishing her 'Shunamite,' an Oriental melodrama, which will be played in October, and is charming. Coppet will weep at the representation of it. Constant and

Auguste are each writing a tragedy, Sabran a comic opera, Sismondi his history, Bonstetten his philosophy, and I my letter to Juliette. Madame de Staël has read us many chapters of her work. It everywhere bears the marks of her talent. I wish you could induce her to omit politics; she ought not to obtrude her republicanism. Mademoiselle Jenner has played a part in a tragedy of Werner which was acted before twenty persons on Friday. She, Werner, and Schlegel acted to perfection. I was exceedingly affected. You will not be curious, however, to hear more about a piece in which there were distributed, among the three actors, three murders and one assassination. We were allowed to breathe a little between the acts, when Sabran and Auguste were admirable in some proverbs of M. de Chateauxvieux. The arrival of Cuvier has been a happy distraction for Madame de Staël; they have been well pleased with each other. Werner is about to leave us for Rome. There is a singular kind of folly and inaptitude in one so swayed by the imagination; it is paying too much even for genius. I accompanied Corinne to Massat, the portrait-painter. To relieve the tediousness of the sitting, a beautiful musical performance had been planned. A Mademoiselle Romilly performed very agreeably on the harp; the *atelier* was a temple of the Muses."

These passages afford a pleasing and faithful idea of the life led by Madame de Staël at Coppet during the ten years of her exile. It was a life without those salient incidents which give variety to a narrative, but full of activity and animation. In 1807 she ventured once more to the vicinity of Paris, in order to arrange for the publication of "Corinne"; but, though her presence was ignored for a time, she was finally ordered to retire to a distance of thirty leagues from the capital, and returned to her asylum at Coppet. In the winter of 1807-'8 she again visited Germany, intent upon acquiring material for her book; and, in the spring, went a second time to Vienna. Six years were spent upon the composition and revision of the "Allemagne," which, as we have seen, was read by installments to her guests at Coppet. When, at length, in 1810, it was completed, she again entered France, in order to superintend its publication at Paris; but, though its first two volumes had been licensed by the censor, Napoleon appears to have taken offense at something which it contained (or did not contain), had the ten thousand copies of the edition cut in pieces by the police, and ordered her to leave France in three days.

At this time, fretted by the restraints of her position, Madame de Staël seriously contemplated emigrating to America; and Dr. Stevens thinks she would certainly have come but for a domestic incident which dispelled her restlessness and turned the current of her thoughts. She fell in love with and secretly married M. Rocca, a young

French officer, of Italian descent and Swiss nativity, who had lately returned to Geneva disabled by wounds which he had received in Spain. At the time of the marriage she was just twice the age of her husband; yet it appears to have been a genuine love-match on both sides, and the rest of Madame de Staël's life was a period of domestic happiness, such as she had not previously known, and such as her previous relations with sundry "adorners" had hardly justified her in expecting.

In 1811 the Emperor's exasperation against the illustrious authoress appears to have become intensified, and her asylum at Coppet was converted into something like a prison. She herself was forbidden to go beyond two leagues from Coppet and Geneva; and her friends were exiled to points which rendered impossible the old solace of social intercourse. Unable to endure this, she conceived the idea of escaping to England; but, in order to do so, she had to make a journey of three thousand leagues through Austria, Poland, and Russia, to Sweden, where Bernadotte had offered her protection. She set out in disguise in May, 1812; barely escaped Napoleon's armies which were then *en route* for Moscow; reached St. Petersburg in August, and was received at court with distinguished attentions, forming a warm friendship with the Emperor Alexander; crossed in September to Stockholm, where she remained during the winter; and in May, 1813, arrived in England, where she published her "Allemagne," thereby establishing her preëminence as an author, and became for a season the lion *par excellence* of London society. Encouraged by the success of the "Allemagne," and surrendering herself once more to the impulses of authorship, she wrote her "Considérations sur la Révolution Française," which did not appear until after her death, and which is at once a vindication of her father's political life and a penetrating discussion of English institutions and society.

The overthrow of Napoleon in 1814 once more rendered accessible her beloved Paris, and her return thither was among the greatest of her social triumphs. Says Dr. Stevens (and this must be our last quotation):

"The King delighted in her company, and esteemed her a powerful support of the government, an 'ally to his crown,' because she represented the European spirit. . . . Louis XVIII, by the elevation of his mind, by his literary tastes, by his graceful admiration, consoled her for the disdain and brutalities of Napoleon. Her *salon* in Paris became one of the forces of the Restoration.' . . . Its highest society gathered around her, and her *salon* was again the intellectual center of the capital. Her two dearest friends hastened from their exile to join her: Mathieu de Montmorency returned to occupy an



honorable place at court; Madame Récamier came from Italy, to embellish, with her undiminished beauty, the renewed circle. 'I passed last evening at Madame de Staël's,' wrote Pictet de Rochemont, 'for the Emperor Alexander was to be there, and I wished to speak to him in behalf of Geneva; he has the best inclination toward us. I found there also Talleyrand, Lafayette, Lally-Tollendal, the two Montmorencys, M. de Sabran, the Duchess of Courland, and a crowd of princes and ambassadors. It was a true triumph for the mistress of the house, a triumph of high interest, and one which was prolonged until three o'clock in the morning with continually increasing *éclat*.' 'She is crowned with success,' wrote Bonstetten; 'the Emperor of Russia, kings, generals, all who have a name, frequent her mansion in Paris!'"

The dramatic episode of the "Hundred Days" caused but a brief interruption to this brilliant carnival of the Restoration; but declining health could less easily be struggled against, and Madame de Staël was compelled to relinquish her beloved society and seek retirement at Coppet. Even there her health continued to fail, as did

that of M. Rocca, and the winter of 1815-'16 was passed in Italy. In Paris, during the winter of 1816-'17 her *salon* was again thronged with the *élite* of its cosmopolitan society; but the honors were now devolved upon her daughter (the Duchess de Broglie), and Madame de Stael was confined to her bed, stricken with a mortal disease. Even there, troops of friends and visitors admitted her influence and did homage to her fame; and her last days were the most brilliant, perhaps, of a strangely brilliant life. She died without pain, on the 14th of July, 1817, and rests at Coppet, amid the scenes consecrated by her genius.

"The old château," says our author at the close of his work, "the forest cemetery, the whole of Coppet, remain as her monument; her native country has, as yet, given her none; but she needs no local memorial. Pericles said, over the heroic dead of Athens, that the whole earth is the monument of great characters. Such a life is still effectively extant in the intellectual world. Her ashes are on the shores of Lake Leman; her spirit is everywhere."

## KING LEAR.

THE theatrical wardrobe of Edward Alleyn, Elizabethan actor and manager, and the founder of Dulwich College, included "a scarlet cloak with two broad gold-laces, with gold buttons down the sides for Leir." It is believed, however, that this Leir was not the Lear of Shakespeare, but the hero of an older drama, "The Most Famous Chronicle History of Leire, King of England, and his Three Daughters," first performed about 1593. Shakespeare's "King Lear" came upon the stage probably in 1605, and was first printed in 1608, "as it was played before the King's Majesty at Whitehall, upon St. Stephen's night in the Christmas holidays, by his Majesty's Servants, playing usually at the Globe on the Bankside."

The fable of King Lear and his daughters belongs to the popular literature of Europe. The same story is related of Theodosius, "a wise Emperor in the City of Rome," in that old collection of romances, legends, and apologues called the "Gesta Romanorum," written or compiled about 1340, and "a fashionable work," as Dunlop describes it, in 1358. King Lear's history is also contained in the "Chronicle" of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and in the old novel of "Perceforest," which comprehends the fabulous account of Britain previous to the age of Ar-

thur, and is accounted the longest and best-known romance of its class. From "Perceforest" the story found its way into Fabian's "Concordance of Stories," written in the time of Henry VII, into Warner's "Albion's England," and into the "Faerie Queen" of Spenser. The "lamentable ballads" dealing with the subject are supposed to be of later date, for these present a tragical catastrophe in correspondence with the Shakespearean tragedy; whereas all the other versions of the story terminate comfortably.

No doubt Shakespeare had before him the "Chronicle History of Leire," and borrowed something from its method of conducting the story. In the old play the daughters are named Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella. The faithful fool does not appear, and there are no such characters as Gloucester, Edgar, and Edmund; the episode of Gloucester and his sons being borrowed, as Steevens alleges, from Sidney's "Arcadia." A character called Perillus corresponds in some degree with the Kent of Shakespeare, and attends upon Lear in his misfortunes; but Perillus has not been previously banished, and is, as Mr. Collier says of him, "a poor spiritless lamenter over the injuries of Cordella," affording no contrast to Lear. Gonorill and Ragan are not married until their husbands have been bribed by

the offer of the division of the kingdom. Ragan engages a ruffian to murder Lear and Perillus in a wood; an affecting scene ensues, when the two old men so plead for their lives that the assassin shrinks from the accomplishment of his task, and they escape to France. The King of France, visiting England in the disguise of a pilgrim, encounters Cordella, who has been driven from her father's court. Each falls in love with the other; he does not know that she is a princess, nor does she know that he is a king. They subsequently become man and wife. There is no trace of the madness of Lear in the old play. Cordella and her husband, the King of France, invade England, and restore Lear to the throne; Gonorill and Ragan are defeated and exiled; Cordella and the King of France, after reposing awhile with Lear, return to their own dominions. A character called Mumford, a French nobleman, who is at times of comical disposition, does not appear in Shakespeare's tragedy.

It is probable that Burbadge, the leading player of the time, was the original representative of Lear. Davies, in his "Dramatic Miscellanies," suggests that Joseph Taylor was probably the original Edgar; but the suggestion has no authority. After the Restoration the tragedy was reproduced, some time about 1663, at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields; the principal character being no doubt sustained by the great Mr. Betterton. "In all probability," writes Davies, "Nokes, whose face was a comedy, acted the Fool with Betterton's Lear; if so, we may guess the consequence." For Davies was one of those who held that the pathos of Lear was likely to be endangered by the presence of his poor fool upon the scene.

It has been conjectured that the tragedy, for all its nobility and greatness, fell short as an acting play of the popularity enjoyed by other of the poet's works. His contemporaries make no mention of "King Lear," and but two quarto editions of the work were issued prior to the folio of 1623. Nothing is known of Burbadge's Lear; nor does Betterton's representation of the character appear to have received attention from the critics of his time. Much was written of his portrayal of Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, and other Shakespearean creations; but of his Lear no account has come down to us. Apparently the tragedy was not represented between 1663 and 1681. When it was brought upon the stage of the Dorset Gardens Theatre in 1681, it was found to have been grievously altered, disguised, and maimed. It had undergone merciless adaptation at the hands of Nahum Tate, who subsequently, upon the death of Shadwell, became poet laureate; and who, in combination with Dr. Nicholas Brady, perpetrated a metrical version of the Psalms of David.

In his dedication of the mangled edition, Tate speaks of the original as "an obscure piece recommended to his notice by a friend." Having thus accidentally become acquainted with the Lear of Shakespeare, he discovered it to be a "heap of jewels unstrung and unpolished, yet so dazzling in their disorder that I soon perceived I had seized a treasure." He resolved forthwith, "out of zeal for all the remains of Shakespeare," to remodel the story. He proceeds: "It was my good fortune to light on one expedient to rectify what was wanting in the regularity and probability of the tale, which was, to run through the whole a love betwixt Edgar and Cordelia, that never changed word with each other in the original," etc.

George Colman, who in 1768 produced his acting edition of "Lear," denounces, as a capital objection to Tate's alteration, the introduction of the love-scenes between Edgar and Cordelia. He asserts that this episodic love, so far from heightening the distress of the story, has rather diffused a languor over all the scenes of the play from which Lear is absent; "the embraces of Cordelia and the ragged Edgar would have appeared too ridiculous for representation, had they not been mixed and incorporated with some of the finest scenes of Shakespeare."

Tate mangles the text incessantly, interpolates much trash of his own, and entirely rewrites the last act, supplying it with a cheerful termination. "They are all as happy and jolly as heart could wish," writes Mr. Genest of the surviving characters. Edmund dies while Regan and Goneril are "pulling caps" for him; in his last moments he consoles himself with reflecting on his success in love:

"Who would not choose like me to yield his breath,  
T'have rival queens contend for him in death?"

Lear is permitted a combat with four murderers; he is turned of fourscore and unarmed; but he snatches a partisan and disposes of two of his assailants. Further of Tate's alterations may be noted his total suppression of the Fool. Oswald, the steward, is changed into a gentleman usher. A grand scene is introduced, in which Cordelia is attacked by two ruffians in the pay of Edmund, and is gallantly rescued by Edgar. There is also a grotto scene in which Edmund and Regan are described as "amorously seated listening to music." When Gloster's eyes are put out, Regan says:

"Read and save the Cambrian prince a labor;  
If thy eyes fail thee, call for spectacles!"

And here are certain of Tate's own lines tacked on to Lear's grand speech in the second act:

"Blood! Fire! here—Leprosies and bluest plagues!  
Room, room for Hell to belch her horrors up,  
And drench the Circes in a stream of fire;  
Hark, how the Infernals echo to my rage  
Their whips and snakes!"

Betterton was the original Lear of Tate's version, the great Mrs. Barry appeared as Cordelia, and Regan was impersonated by a titled actress, Lady Slingsby, of whom little is known but that she played many characters of importance late in the seventeenth century. We read, however, that "Dame Mary Slingsby, widow, from St. James's parish, was buried in St. Pancras parish, March 1, 1694."

On the title-page of his play of "Injured Love; or, the Cruel Husband," published in 1707, Tate coolly describes himself as the "author of the tragedy called King Lear." His adaptation had secured firm possession of the stage. De Quincey, disputing the assertions of Steevens and Malone as to the neglect of Shakespeare that prevailed for many years after the Restoration, maintains that the general public were not in fault, they were without choice in the matter; "the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Davenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewelry of Shakespeare," should, as he urges, be charged exclusively against the managers and not against the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing the original text with the spurious, or of distinguishing the one from the other. Addison entered a solitary protest against Tate's edition. "King Lear" is an admirable tragedy as Shakespeare wrote it," he says in the "Spectator" (No. 40); "but as it is reformed according to the chimerical notion of poetical justice, in my humble opinion it has lost half its beauty." Davies probably represented general opinion when, condemning Tate for his vanity in pretending to mend Shakespeare, and for claiming the play as his own, he asserts that Tate "rescued the play from that oblivion to which the actors had consigned it," and that in the conduct of certain scenes, "whether contrived by himself or hinted to him by his friend Dryden, he is not unhappy." Moreover, Davies is of opinion that the loves of Edgar and Cordelia are happily imagined, strongly connecting the main plot of the play, and enhancing its interest. "I have seen this play represented twenty or thirty times," he writes in his "Dramatic Miscellanies"; "yet I can truly affirm that the spectators always dismissed the two lovers with the most rapturous applause. . . . It is a gleam of sunshine, and a promise of fair weather in the midst of storm and tempest. . . . Successive audiences by their persevering approbation have justified the happy ending of this tragedy, with

the restoration of Lear, and the marriage of Cordelia and Edgar." Dr. Johnson seems also to have approved a happy ending to Lear, and holds that "if other excellences are equal, the audience will always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue." In the present case he proceeds to say the public had decided: "Cordelia from the time of Tate has always retired with victory and felicity." As Steevens urged, he should rather have said that managers had so decided, and the public had been obliged to acquiesce.

Mrs. Bracegirdle followed Mrs. Barry in the character of Cordelia, and, after the death of Betterton, Booth succeeded to the part of Lear. Booth's performance was much admired; he was "inimitably expressive," from the full tones of his voice and his manner of harmonizing his words. Davies says that "Booth rendered the character more amiable, or, to speak critically, less terrible than Garrick." He was supported by the Cordelia of Mrs. Booth, formerly Miss Santlow, a beautiful woman and a graceful dancer, but rather a cold actress in tragedy. After Booth came Antony Boheme, who gave to his Lear "a trait of the antique." Originally a performer in a booth at Bartholomew or Southwark Fair, Boheme had risen to high rank in his profession. He was of noble presence, tall, with expressive features and a powerful and harmonious voice. In 1731, Quin, who had been wont to appear as Gloucester to the Lear of Boheme, attempted the part of Lear. He had been negligent in attending the rehearsals of the tragedy, and is said to have fallen infinitely short of his predecessor in almost every scene. "However, as he was a man of undeniable merit, and an excellent speaker, he did not so entirely offend as to throw himself out of public favor." On the 18th of March, 1742, at the Goodman's Fields Theatre, on the occasion of his benefit, Garrick appeared as King Lear, and, by way of exhibiting his versatility, afterward personated the hero of the farce of "The Schoolboy": thus portraying on the same night fourscore and fourteen.

At this time Garrick was content to appear in the "King Lear" of Nahum Tate. But, in 1756, he ventured upon the production at Drury Lane of "King Lear," "with restorations from the text of Shakespeare." Garrick was but a timid reformer, however. He was careful to preserve at least half of the alterations of Tate. He had contemplated restoring the Fool to the representation; Woodward had undertaken the part, and "promised to be very chaste in his coloring, and not to counteract the agonies of Lear"; but Garrick's heart failed him. Some years before, in a spirited pamphlet entitled "An Examen of the Suspicious Husband, with a Word of Advice

to Garrick," an appeal had been made to him to restore the original text. "Why will you do so great an injury to Shakespeare as to perform Tate's execrable alteration of him? Read and consider the two plays seriously, and then make the public and the memory of the authors some amends by giving us *Lear* in the original, *Fool* and all. . . . How can you keep your countenance in the fifth act, when you come to 'the spheres stopping their courses, the sun making halt, and the winds bearing on their rosy wings that Cordelia is a queen?'" "*King Lear*" was also performed at this time at Covent Garden Theatre, and society was much divided as to whether it should the more admire Garrick or Barry in the part. Various epigrams were published; Barry was said to be "every inch a king," while Garrick was "every inch *King Lear*"; Barry, it was alleged, was rewarded with loud huzzas—to Garrick were given only tears! The fact that Barry was tall, and that Garrick was short, furnished great opportunity to the wits. Among other verses current at the time was the following:

"When kingly Barry acts, the boxes ring  
With echoing praise, 'Ay, every inch a king!'  
When Garrick dwindling whines, the assenting  
house  
Rewhisps aptly back, 'A mouse! a mouse!'"

It seems to have been agreed on the whole, however, that Garrick's performance was the more perfect. Barry was majestic and venerable—he was an impressive elocutionist, and he had great power of pathetic expression; but his silver-toned voice lacked force and variety, and he could not display the passionate emotion which distinguished the representation of Garrick. Murphy describes Garrick in *Lear* as transformed into a weak old man still retaining an air of royalty. In the mad scenes his genius was specially demonstrated; there were no sudden starts, no violent gestures; his movements were slow and feeble; misery was depicted upon his countenance; he moved his head in the most deliberate manner, his eyes were fixed; during the whole time he presented a scene of woe and misery, and a total alienation of mind from every idea but that of his unkind daughters. Davies writes of the extraordinary effect upon the audience of Garrick's delivery of the curse: "They seemed to shrink from it as from a blast of lightning." His preparation for it is described as extremely affecting: "His throwing away his crutch, kneeling on one knee, clasping his hands together, and lifting his eyes toward heaven, presented a picture worthy the pencil of a Raphael." Hazlitt records certain traditions of Garrick's *Lear*. Once, in the middle of the mad scene, "his

crown of straw came off, which circumstance, though it would have been fatal to a common actor, did not produce the smallest interruption or even notice in the house. On another occasion, while he was kneeling to repeat the curse, the first row in the pit stood up in order to see him better; the second row, not willing to lose the precious moments by remonstrating, stood up too; and so, by a tacit movement, the entire pit rose to hear the withering imprecation, while the whole passed in such cautious silence that you might have heard a pin drop."

It may be noted that Garrick's Cordelia in 1756 was Mrs. Davies, whose good looks Churchill observed upon in "*The Rosciad*." An earlier Cordelia was the pathetic Mrs. Cibber. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber are said to have "worked themselves up to the shedding of tears" in the parts of *Lear* and Cordelia. Gloucester was played at this time by an actor known as Ned Berry, said to be "a man of very considerable abilities in a great variety of parts." Upon the retirement of Berry, Garrick called upon his future biographer, the useful Tom Davies, to undertake the part, who has related that "the candor of the audience gave him much more encouragement than he expected."

George Colman's alteration of "*Lear*" appears to have been accomplished for the sake of William Powell, a young actor who, during Garrick's absence in Italy, won great applause. His genius was unquestionable, but his career as an actor was prematurely closed. "Powell's '*King Lear*,'" writes Davies, "ought not to be forgotten; it was a fair promise of something great in future. He had about him the blossoms of an excellent actor. Had he lived we should not have regretted quite so much the loss of our great tragic actors, Garrick and Barry." Colman's acting edition of the play, produced at Covent Garden in 1768, enjoyed little success. In the first four acts, great part of the original text was restored, if something too much of Tate was retained. The love-scenes between Edgar and Cordelia were suppressed, not, it would appear, to the gratification of the house. "I heartily wish," writes Davies, "he had not taken such a dislike to the passion of Edgar for Cordelia; he would have rescued that love-plan, which I think a good one, from meaner hands, and given a new luster to the play." The love-scenes were certainly prized by both actors and audience. "It may be questioned," writes Genest, "whether the generality of performers would not rather act Edgar and Cordelia, as altered by Tate, than as written by Shakespeare; though certainly an actor can hardly be condemned to pronounce more insipid lines than those of Tate." Colman preserved the happy ending invented by Tate,



while announcing that he had endeavored to purge the tragedy of the alloy which had so long been suffered to debase it. The character of the Fool he reluctantly suppressed: "After the most serious consideration, I was convinced that such a character in a tragedy would not be endured on the modern stage." Genest clearly approves of the omission.

Mrs. Siddons, who first played Cordelia for her benefit in 1788, was content with Tate's mangled edition of "Lear," as modified by Garrick. John Kemble, for all his zeal on behalf of Shakespeare, even went out of his way to restore certain of Tate's interpolations which Garrick had sensibly suppressed. The play-bill enumerated five characters which did not belong to Shakespeare; among these were included two pages, who bore the trains of Regan and Goneril, and Aranthé, the confidante of Cordelia, who attended her and listened to her with patient devotion. Kemble was said to have been "very great in the curse"; but his Lear was scarcely counted among his most admired impersonations.

On the 10th of February, 1823, the play-bill of Drury Lane Theatre contained this notification: "In obedience to the suggestions of men of literary eminence, from the time of Addison, that the original fifth act of this tragedy should be restored, the proprietor deems it his duty to pay deference to such opinion; and on this evening Mr. Kean will conclude the character of Lear, as originally written by Shakespeare." Lear was understood to be Kean's favorite part. He had said that he was much obliged to the London public for the good opinion they had expressed of him, but that, when they came to see him over the dead body of Cordelia, they would have quite a different notion of the matter. "He promised to make the audience as mad as himself." The result was unfortunate. Kean had some difficulty in carrying his Cordelia, Mrs. West, and the audience were moved to laughter, which did not cease until the curtain fell. In other respects, Tate was preserved; the Fool did not appear, and Edgar made love to Cordelia as usual. Hazlitt, writing of Kean's Lear in 1820, when the play ended happily, found grave fault with the impersonation; it was "altogether inferior" to his performance of Othello. "He failed, either from insurmountable difficulties, or from his own sense of the magnitude of the undertaking. . . . He was too violent at first, and too tame afterward. . . . He made the well-known curse a piece of downright rant. . . . He tore it to tatters, to very rags." Altogether Hazlitt seems to have preferred the Lear of Junius Brutus Booth, who had assumed the part at Covent Garden in 1820, when Charles Kemble

appeared as Edgar, and Macready as Edmund. "Kean, with all his powers, failed in the part as a whole," writes Campbell the poet. "He absolutely lowered the tone of it, at times, to the whine of an ancient beggar."

In January, 1783, a French version of "King Lear" was presented in Paris, after performances before the court at Versailles. M. Ducis, the translator or adapter, had considerably altered the original in his endeavors to invest it with more classicality of form. The first act of the tragedy was suppressed. Cordelia's name is changed to Elmonde, and a new character, a certain Ulric, King of Denmark, appears upon the scene. Before the curtain rises, Lear has divided his kingdom between Regan and Goneril; Cordelia has been disinherited, and has taken refuge in the cave of a hermit. She is accused of carrying on a secret and traitorous correspondence with Ulric, who is threatening to invade England. This calumny serves as a pretext for her banishment, and is the cause of all her misfortunes. Baron Grimm charged M. Ducis with perplexing a narrative which already, without an uncommon degree of attention, could not be understood. It was agreed, however, that M. Ducis had given the injustice of Lear a motive "less frivolous and puerile" than was contained in the original play. There were but two characters of importance, Lear and Elmonde. These were admirably supported by Sieur Brizard and Madame Vestris. The French "Lear" was well received, both by the court and city. The author, M. Ducis, was called for, "but not earnestly, as the last act did not succeed so well as the preceding ones." When he overcame his reluctance to appear, the moment was ill-chosen for his entry upon the scene. One of the performers had just announced the second representation of the tragedy, and had made, in addition, the important statement that a treaty of peace had been signed with England. This was, of course, the treaty which secured the independence of America.

It was not until Mr. Macready undertook the cares of management, and obtained absolute power at Covent Garden Theatre, that the pure text of "Lear" was restored to the stage, and an end was made of Nahum Tate's interpolations. The tragedy no longer ended happily, and the Fool, whom Tate had banished—possibly, as Campbell suggests, "because he wished to have no other fool than himself concerned with the tragedy"—now returned to the scene, to find admirable representation at the hands of the actress since known as Mrs. German Reed. This important restoration was not effected, however, without much anxiety and misgiving on Macready's part. At one time, indeed, as his journal

testifies, he viewed the proposed change with something of despair. He writes, under date of the 4th of January, 1838: "Went to the theatre, where I went on a first rehearsal of 'King Lear.' My opinion of the introduction of the Fool is that, like many such terrible contrasts in poetry and painting, in acting representation it will fail of effect; it will either weary and annoy or distract the spectator. I have no hope of it, and think that at the last we shall be obliged to dispense with it. Settled the scenery, which will be very striking." At this time it was arranged that the part of the Fool should be intrusted to Meadows, an excellent artist, whose fame, however, was due to his performances of low comedy. On the 5th of January, Macready notes a conversation with Messrs. Wilmott and Bartley, his prompter and stage-manager, officials of sound judgment and long experience: "Mentioning my apprehensions that, with Meadows, we should be obliged to omit the part, I described the sort of fragile, hectic, beautiful-faced boy that he should be, and stated my belief that it never could be acted. Bartley observed that a woman should play it. I caught at the idea, and instantly exclaimed, 'Miss P. Horton is the person!' I was delighted at the thought." The success of the performance was very great. Lear long continued to be one of Macready's finest and most esteemed impersonations. "I must own," writes Campbell, after seeing for the first time Macready as Lear, "I missed the splendid eyes of Kemble in the old king's appearance; but still, Macready's performance is that of a masterly actor."

Elaborate revivals of "King Lear" distinguished the managements of Mr. Phelps at Sadler's Wells, and of Mr. Charles Kean at the Princess's. The text was, of course, respected, and the tragedy was liberally provided with stage fittings and scenic decorations. Mr. Phelps's Lear was a heedful following in the footsteps of Mr. Macready. Mr. Kean's performance won general approval. Mr. Cole, in his biography of the tragedian, writes: "Mr. Kean's attitude and

expression when he flung down his hunting-spear, and fell on his knees before he uttered the celebrated curse on Goneril, presented a picture worthy of the pencil of a Raphael." It is clear that Mr. Cole had been reading Davies's account of the Lear of Garrick. The hunting-spear upon which Lear supports himself was first introduced by Edmund Kean; earlier Lears had leaned upon a walking-stick with a crooked handle, such as various characters employ upon the stage—Shylock, for instance, Sir Giles Overreach, the Mothers Bunch and Goose, and the pantaloons of pantomime.

The costume of Lear had long been left to the taste or the fancy of the performers. Garrick's aspect in the part was unpicturesque enough. He wore a court-dress with silk stockings, buckled shoes, and ruffled wrists; his powdered wig was disheveled and his lace-cravat was disarranged. Royal robes dangled from his shoulders; but, indeed, he looked more like Lord Ogleby than King Lear. Macready is said to have been the first Lear who wore a beard; Garrick was smooth-shaven, as was John Kemble. Macready wore robes of ermine and velvet, such as theatrical antiquarianism could not approve. Mr. C. Kean, in his selection of dresses, arms, and implements, and in the pictorial accompaniments, whether architectural or sylvan, sought to present "an original picture of early Saxon England, at a time when the land was peopled with rude heathens, and the minds and hearts of men, as yet unreclaimed by the softening influences of Christianity, were barbarous and cruel." He ascribed the action of the drama to the eighth century; a period sufficiently remote to accord with the subject, but still within the scope of authority in regard to manners, customs, and costumes.

The present performance of the tragedy at the Princess's Theatre shows a capable Lear in Mr. Edwin Booth, who, however, has received little assistance from the efforts of the management.

*All The Year Round.*

## THE METTERNICH MEMOIRS.\*

IN our notice of the first installment of these memoirs, we remarked that they are "neither a history nor a biography, but a mass of raw material out of which, if it were copious enough, history and biography might be made." The same remark applies to the present installment, which consists of two volumes, and covers the period between 1815 and 1829. The arrangement, indeed, is somewhat better than in the earlier volumes, for the chronological order is more strictly observed; but, on the other hand, there is in the present installment no broad general outline such as the Autobiographical Memoir of the first part furnished, and the state-paper element is rather more obtrusive. Moreover, the reader will look in vain for anything so striking as "A Gallery of Celebrated Contemporaries," which followed the autobiography, and which contained the famous "portrait" of Napoleon; or for anything so valuable in itself as the chapters "On the History of the Alliances of 1813-1814" and on the Congress of Vienna. Of course, in a period of general peace, the work of a diplomatist will be apt to be less generally interesting than when it deals with such events as those that were crowded into the momentous epoch between 1795 and 1815; but the editor of the "memoirs" appears to have acted upon the theory that any state-paper which is valuable as a part of the public archives is also interesting when inserted in a biography, and he has accordingly inserted many whose very titles will serve as a notification to the general reader to skip them. Dealing for the most part with past and moribund politics, or with transient misunderstandings between courts, they possess none of that intrinsic interest which pertains to even the driest discussion of general principles, but are in the main the mere routine work of a minister of state. No intelligible system of selection appears to have been applied to them, and in many instances purely formal and utterly unimportant memoranda, such as a request for leave of absence and the Emperor's comment thereon, are duly numbered and inserted. "My life may be unpleasant for me to experience," Metternich is represented as saying, "but my biography will certainly not be tedious." Even this conviction, we fear, would have been shaken by the perusal of these memoirs; for at least

half the contents of the present volumes are scarcely more interesting than those "public documents" with which Congressmen are wont to favor their constituents, and with which these constituents are wont to favor the rag-picker.

What redeems them from downright and unqualified dullness are the private letters of Metternich, which are unexpectedly copious both in numbers and in length. These letters would be profoundly interesting if they did nothing more than reveal to us the private life and interior sentiments of a great minister, whose finger is really on the very pulse of the machine; but they are interesting in themselves merely as letters, and exhibit much higher literary talent than any of the author's more formal compositions. It must be said, too, that they portray Metternich in what is by far the most attractive aspect of his character. The greater number of them were written to his wife and children, during temporary absences on official business; and it is very pleasing to observe how anxious he is that they shall share in any sight-seeing or experiences that he has himself enjoyed, and how promptly and regularly, amid the overwhelming pressure of state-cares, he performs a task which, under such circumstances, one is apt to feel absolved from. Over and over again he declares that his only genuine satisfactions in life are derived from its domestic side; and though, in general, for Metternich to say a thing of this kind constitutes presumptive evidence against its truth, these intimate private letters seem to show that in this case he was giving utterance to the genuine sentiments of his heart. On such occasions as the death of his young daughter in the first bloom of her womanhood, and of the son whom he had trained to take his own place, the real man comes unmistakably through the thick veil behind which the diplomatist usually hides himself, and we feel for him sympathy as well as respect—a rare attitude for the reader to take toward a man of the Metternichian type.

The most interesting consecutive series of the letters is that written from Italy during a journey which he made in the year 1817 in order to transfer the Archduchess Leopoldine, the newly-married Crown Princess of Portugal, to the envoy of her royal husband, who had been dispatched with a fleet to receive her at Leghorn. He is enchanted with Venice, appropriately enthusiastic over the artistic riches of Florence, profoundly moved by the historic memories and ecclesiastical pageantries of Rome, charmed with the situation and surroundings of Naples, and in

\* *Memoirs of Prince Metternich. 1815-1829. Edited by Prince Richard Metternich. The Papers classed and arranged by M. A. de Klinkowström. Translated by Mrs. Alexander Napier. Vols. III and IV. London: Richard Bentley & Son. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.*

love with the country and climate. He writes more frankly of his impressions, and is more minute in his descriptions, than a similar visitor would be now; but one must recollect in reading them that these descriptions were written before the age of guide-books and scribbling tourists. Moreover, in spite of the torrent of descriptive literature that has since submerged the country under what Carlyle calls "a sedimentary deposit of words," many of them still possess a certain freshness and interest. This, for example, bears the stamp of genuine, and not merely conventional or simulated, feeling:

"ROME, April 2d.—Here we are, my dear. I shall not undertake to tell you what we find in Rome: I leave that to Marie. Do not think, however, that she is exaggerating, for that is simply impossible. Imagination attains to what has been presented by the senses; in vain we delude ourselves; that circle is never left. Rome must be seen to be believed in. All that the most beautiful cities in the world can show of magnificence of detail is gathered together here, and certainly surpassed.

"Rome has been to me like a person I tried to imagine without having seen; such calculations are always deceptive. I have found everything different from what I supposed; I expected Rome would be old and somber—it is antique and superb, brilliant and new. I do not know what I would give to take you for a single instant to the window of my drawing-room; and this window is nothing compared to one in a dressing-room which is prepared for the Empress! Picture to yourself the most splendid view, so rich that one would accuse of excessive exaggeration the painter of such a scene. Opposite and beneath me I have St. Peter's, the Castle of St. Angelo, the Column of Antoninus, innumerable obelisks and palaces, each one more magnificent than the other; fountains throwing up an enormous volume of water; to the left the Coliseum, and St. John Lateran; opposite, the Vatican, etc., etc. These, indeed, are a number of names, but they give no idea of the objects. St. Peter's and the Vatican together are as large as the city of Turin, which contains sixty thousand souls. The square of St. Peter's alone would contain two hundred thousand. The only thing which could give any idea of these spaces are the Tuilleries, the Square of Louis XV, and the Champs-Élysées. The *garde-meubles* are, taken separately, miserable hovels compared to twenty private houses which count for nothing in Rome. The Farnese Palace is one of the largest and most lofty—well, the high-altar of St. Peter's is six feet higher than the palace, and it is in bronze."

It strikes us, too, that we have read no more animated description of the ceremonies of Holy Week at Rome than the following:

"April 10th.—We live in the midst of pagan temples and Christian basilicas; the last three days we have alternated between the Sistine Chapel, the

museums of the Vatican, and the Church of St. Peter's. The last of the grand religious ceremonies will take place to-morrow; the place alone would make it very beautiful, for it is to be at St. Peter's. The functions on Holy Thursday and Good Friday were beneath my expectations. For one thing, the Holy Father did not officiate, so the high mass was reduced to the ordinary service; besides, there is no doubt that what I have seen at the Sistine Chapel was not equal to the ceremonies which formerly took place at the electoral ecclesiastical courts; and the washing of feet and the repast of the Apostles are infinitely more imposing at Vienna. The ceremonies here take place in halls and chapels much too small, although in the largest palace in the world. These places are encumbered with strangers: for one Catholic you see eight or ten Protestants, for the most part English. The guards are obliged to use their halberds: the Pope, the apostles, the sovereigns—all is confusion. On Holy Thursday they pass from the Sistine Chapel to the Pauline Chapel; from thence to the hall where the apostles dine. There is a fight at each door, and generally blood flows. Yesterday, for example, an English lady, fancying herself stronger than a guard, had her cheek pierced by a halberd. One hears nothing but cries of 'My shoe!' 'My veil!' 'You are crushing me!' 'Your sword is running into my leg!' 'Give way, please!' and then knocks and blows in abundance. The noise ceases, and the ceremony is over. Last year an Englishman, determined to pass between two guards who were in line, forming a passage for the Pope, had his nose taken off between the shoulders of the two guards (they wear cuirasses on Holy Thursday). You may imagine that the holiness of the place and the unction of the services gain nothing by these occurrences.

"In my opinion the effect of the illuminated cross in St. Peter's surpasses all description. This immense basilica, enveloped in darkness, is lighted from a single focus; the cross, about fifty feet in height, so suspended as to have the appearance of sustaining itself, is wonderfully beautiful. The effects of light in the side-chapels are marvelous—the tombs seem to be reanimated. On one of the pillars Pope Gregory XIII seems to be coming out of his niche. The magnificent lion on the tomb of Clement XIV, by Canova, has the appearance of springing to defend the approach to the tomb. Seen from the end of the church, the cross is framed by the four columns of the high altar; each step presents a new and magical effect. Picture to yourself all this space illumined by a single ray of light, this light losing itself in the vast space, and only reflected by the ceilings in gilding and mosaic; this is the time to judge of the immensity of the edifice. The door is opened in the middle of the church, and thus the cross is seen from the other side of the Piazza of St. Peter's. At that distance it seems about the size of a bishop's cross. The Piazza is dark, and the cross is the only light visible.

"The Pope's benediction has also a striking effect. The moment when the Holy Father, carried



in a chair, appears at the window in the front of the church, and rises to bless the people, all the people falling on their knees, is most solemn. But it seems as if bad luck attended all the religious ceremonies at Rome. After the benediction the Holy Father sits down; he remains at the window; a cardinal advances and throws to the people indulgences written on sheets of paper. All the ragamuffins assemble, struggling and fighting to get one of the papers. There are shouts and laughter, as when one throws money in the street; the victors make off as fast as they can, and use—I know not how—their indulgences."

There is a spirited description of the ascent of Vesuvius, then a much more unusual feat than now; but the following remarks upon the country towns of Italy direct attention to a point which is commonly overlooked by travelers, and which is, perhaps, less striking since the Northern capitals of Europe have received such architectural embellishment:

"By comparing the country towns of Italy with those of any other country, one is able to form an idea of the intrinsic value of these places. Perugia is what Iglau is with us—a country town about fifty leagues from the capital. Here there are ten palaces, each of them larger than the old Liechtenstein palace. I occupy one which is certainly more than twice the size. These palaces are full of old but beautiful furniture. There are also splendid pictures, and a great number of marbles. The palace which the Emperor occupies would be the most beautiful house in Vienna. The proprietor is a young man who has married a sister of Prince Odescalchi, and he refurnished it three years ago, at the time of his marriage. There are two theatres at Perugia going on at the same time; an opera-house as large as that of the Kärntnerthor, and one for comedy as large as the Wieden; three large churches, magnificent, of which two are painted entirely in fresco by the best masters, among others Pietro Perugino, Raphael's master; a university in a magnificent situation; and an Academy of Fine Arts, better appointed than that of Vienna.

"In all these places, which are full of idlers, there are singers who would give great pleasure at Vienna, bad comedians playing detestable pieces, a crowd of mendicants too lazy to gather the fruits which fall into their mouths and the vegetables on which they walk. After all, out of a hundred of these sluggards, eighty of them are clever, and often not one who would be unbearably tiresome. There is not one who has not all the appearance of poverty, yet, nevertheless, has his purse well furnished."

While at Leghorn, awaiting the arrival of the Portuguese fleet, he visited the American squadron, then lying in the roadstead, and describes his visit in a passage which is hardly worth quoting, perhaps, but which is interesting as showing how much pains he took to acquaint those at home with every detail of his experiences:

"We dined at the principal hotel—which did not deserve that title—and at six in the evening we embarked to pay a visit to the American Commodore. To avoid the firing of guns I would not be announced, and I remained on board till sunset, when they do not salute. The flag-ship has eighty-four guns, and is one of the most beautiful vessels I have ever seen. The Americans, who had a great rivalry with the English, owed their success in the last war to the new construction of their ships of the line, some of which carry as many as ninety guns. They are constructed like frigates, but without quarter-decks, and are fast sailers like frigates, and can, consequently, overtake these vessels, which in England never carry more than eighty guns. They can also avoid, with the same facility, vessels of the line of greater tonnage. The Commodore received us with much distinction; he immediately placed the whole crew under arms, and showed me over every part of his ship. Its whole appearance and neatness are admirable. I do not know if, in these respects, it does not even surpass the English ships; on the other hand, the style of the crew does not equal that of the latter. The Commodore is a great amateur of the fine arts and fine animals. He has pictures in his cabin, among others a copy of a portrait of Pope Julius II, after Raphael, and, between decks and on the upper deck, African gazelles and a great Canadian bear. Between-decks, where the sailors dine, there is on each table a pyramid of very clean vessels, which contain the drink of the sailors, and a Bible distributed by the Bible Society of Boston. The *maladie biblique* extends through both hemispheres."

A few days later he visited the Portuguese vessels, and thus describes them:

"They are very fine. The Jean VI is pierced for ninety guns: it carries only thirty-six, for in every place where there should be one beyond that number they have made a cabin for one of the numerous ladies we are sending to Brazil. The Archduchess's apartment is as well cared for as possible; it is spacious and furnished with much luxury. She has a fine, grand dining-room, a bedroom, dressing-room, and bath. Besides all this, there is a great tent on the deck, which would easily hold three hundred people. The St. Sebastian is of the same power, and Eltz will, consequently, find himself lodged as if he were the ambassador of Neptune himself. It is difficult to imagine all the people that these vessels contain: besides the Austrian ladies, there is the Portuguese Court—that is to say, three officials of the court. Each of these gentlemen has his wife and children with him, and they all have large families; the Grand-Master, Castel-Melhor, has five children. The number of officers of every grade has been tripled. Above all, remember that a considerable number of cows, calves, pigs, sheep, four thousand fowls, some hundreds of ducks, and four to five hundred canaries, and large and small birds from Brazil, and you must see that the ark of old Noah was a child's toy in comparison with the Jean VI."

In general, the Prince preserves in his letters a certain diplomatic gravity and sedateness, but now and then he condescends to what, in others, might be called playfulness, but which in him, perhaps, attains the dignity of humor. Here is a letter written during a visit to Prague in the year 1820:

"I live here at the Palais Fürstenberg, the same Prince who married a Princess of Baden last year. He is having his house put in order, to settle here next August with his young wife. If the Prince comes, and is not beside himself with anger, he must be the most tasteless man that ever existed. His steward received me yesterday, and conducted me through an immense suite of rooms. When I saw the way they were decorated I did not know how to keep my countenance. Wherever the hand of the artist or artisan was busy, sculptures, pictures, furniture, hangings, and other works stare at the spectator like the phantasmagoria of a fever-dream. The great chairs in the chief saloon, of black, polished wood, stand on four gilded eagles' claws, and at their backs, in the form of a shield, are different arrangements of Cupids and eagles in gilded wood. The furniture is of blue damask, ornamented with white muslin in great bunches, and edged with gold and silver, intermixed with green and red colors. All the rooms are alike. The two beds in the principal bedroom are hung with what represents shell-work and rock-work—on which are squirrels (as thick as your fist), toads, and bats of gilded wood—and stand in an alcove, at the entrance of which hangs a lamp in the shape of colossal owl, which draws a globe out of the satin hangings; if the globe is covered, the light shines from the eyes of the owl. This horrible steward wished to hear my opinion of all these arrangements. I asked him whether his master had sent him the designs for everything. He assured me, with an expression of the greatest self-satisfaction, that this was not the case—he and the upholsterer had prepared all these things as surprises for the good Prince. 'How delighted the Prince will be,' said he, 'when he learns that all these beautiful things have only cost eighty thousand gulden!'

"The steward wished me to sleep opposite this owl. I answered him that I could not be the first to desecrate their Excellencies' marriage-bed, and betook myself to a room at the back, in which were neither owls nor Cupids. Hardly was I left alone in this room when a clock began to strike, which made as much noise as a church-bell. I got up to search for the clock, but in vain. At last I found a small picture, representing a village with a church, on the tower of which was a clock, which struck so loudly that it could be heard four houses off. As I did not wish to lose my night's rest, I had the unlucky picture taken down and put away. I lay down, when just at midnight a flute began to play quite close to my bed. Looking about, I found it was my night-table which made this noise. After long search I found a knob, by pressing which the musical box close to my ear was temporarily silenced; but from

time to time it repeated its efforts to go off again, sounding something like suppressed groans. This morning, early, I sent for the steward and begged him to take away this piece of furniture, as I did not like to hear music at such unusual hours. 'It is the *sommo*,' answered the good man, 'which I had made for the Princess; the Prince's night-table contains a trumpet.' 'Good Heavens!' I cried, 'then do not their Excellencies sleep at all?' 'Oh, yes,' answered the steward; 'but young married people are easily tired, and that makes them sleep: besides, the music can be stopped.' 'But why,' asked I, 'should there be any music to be stopped?' 'Well, now,' answered he, with a self-satisfied air, 'all sorts of pleasant things may happen to the Prince, and then he has always a trumpet ready.' This is all like a dream; but I would not advise any lady to have a *sommo* that plays like a flute, or to allow her husband a hidden trumpet. . . . I hope to sleep well to-night, for I have had the noisy contrivances one and all removed, to the great anger of the steward. I am certain the poor man despises me heartily for my stupidity and bad taste."

Besides the descriptions of scenes and the narrative of experiences, the letters contain a number of good anecdotes, for two or three of which we shall endeavor to make room. While in Italy in 1817, the Cardinal Legate of Bologna gave a breakfast in Metternich's honor at the university; and there he met the famous pundit, Mezzofanti, then librarian of the university.

"He is worthy of his position" (writes Metternich). "He speaks thirty languages, and as well as if he were a native of each of the thirty countries. I attacked him in German, and I defy any one not to take him for a Saxon. He has never been away from Bologna, and never had a master. I asked him how he got the right inflections of the language. 'The inflections,' replied he, 'all spring from the genius of language. I learned in the grammar that each letter is pronounced in a certain manner; I read and understood it in three months, I could speak it in six, and since then I have held conversations with Germans of different countries. I have done the same with all languages. Indian and Chinese are the only ones that have embarrassed me a little, for I have never had an opportunity of talking with a mandarin or a Brahman, so that I am not sure if I have surmounted the vulgar pronunciation.' I made an inward sign of humility, and thought myself a perfect simpleton beside the Librarian of Bologna."

In another letter belonging to the same period he writes:

"Here is a charming anecdote of Charles Zichy, the younger. He was at Parma last spring. The Archduchess (Marie Louise) invited him to dinner. A famous improvisatore, Gricci, was to give a representation after dinner. Zichy took care to arrive first; after him the Cardinal Archbishop of Parma.

These two gentlemen did not know each other. Zichy, however, guessed by the red stockings of the Cardinal that he must be some one of importance; and ended by breaking the ice, and presenting himself to the Cardinal, saying, '*Io sono Zichy.*' The Cardinal overwhelmed him with compliments, and would have embraced him: '*Signor Gricci, ah! Signor Gricci; che piacere, che reputazione, che talento! Avremmo il piacere di sentirla, d'ammirarla.*' Zichy, delighted to see that his name produced such an extraordinary effect, being pressed by the old Cardinal to give him a specimen of his *savoir faire* just to pass the time, hesitated, talked of his merits, his services, of the Chamber, of all he had done for twenty years without advancement! The arrival of Marie Louise alone put an end to the scene. She herself told me the story to-day."

Still better is an anecdote recorded in a letter from Vienna written in 1824 (September 1st):

"Yesterday an amusing incident occurred, which I must not forget to mention. Tatitscheff got a picture from Italy, which he thinks a Domenichino; whether it is so or not is immaterial. The picture represents a young John the Baptist; the saint is slightly draped with a strip of red cloth, and much more resembles an Amor than the Preacher in the Wilderness. Yesterday evening Tatitscheff received company. A tolerably well-known Polish man of letters went up to the picture, and, looking at it very attentively, asked his neighbor, 'What is that?' '*C'est un Dominiquin*' (French for Domenichino). 'What!' cried he, 'a Dominican never looked like that.'"

As a matter of course, so many private letters could not be disclosed without throwing much light upon the character of their author, and these volumes will be indispensable to whoever in the future would portray or estimate "the man of the Reaction." The quality which they tend most to emphasize is that inordinate egotism which we spoke of in our earlier notice as characterizing the Autobiographical Memoir, and, indeed, everything that Metternich has produced. "Self-conceit," he says somewhere, in his oracular manner, "is the concomitant of a weak mind"; but, if this were literally so, Metternich would have to be regarded as the weakest-minded man of his generation. The manifestations of egotism, even in his family letters, are so incessant, that the reader is first repelled by them, then amused, then disgusted, and ends by ceasing to be aware of them. Differing on an important point from nearly every other member of the ministry, he refers to this, not as a difference of opinion, but says in his most characteristic manner (Vol. III, page 7, note), "In the upper departments of the Government I was alone *on the side of truth* in this important question." No occasion is too solemn, no topic too serious, for

such a display; and, whenever he casts a backward glance over the momentous events in which he had borne a part, it is nearly always made to furnish an excuse for some present piece of self-gratulation. For example, writing from Teplitz, July 27, 1819:

"My dear, I am writing to you in the same room, and on the same table, where I signed the Quadruple Alliance six years ago. It is just about the same time of the year. Everything has changed since then, except myself. I have not revisited this place since 1813. It has been a long road to get here again. What events have happened since the day of my arrival here in that year of grace! Seated at the same desk, thinking over all which then occupied my mind, bringing before my mind's eye what existed then, and what exists no longer, I can not resist a slight sensation of vanity, and an immense feeling of contentment and satisfaction. But if I think over what is, if I compare it with what ought to be, and with that which so easily might have been, I deplore the fate of the world, ever given up to the gravest errors, and to great faults committed in consequence of petty calculations and great illusions. *My mind conceives nothing narrow or limited; I always go, on every side, far beyond all that occupies the greater number of men of business; I cover ground infinitely larger than they can see or wish to see. I can not help saying to myself twenty times a day: 'Good God, how right I am, and how wrong they are! And how easy the reason is to see—it is so clear, so simple, and so natural!' I shall repeat this till my last breath, and the world will go on in its own miserable way none the less.*"

Another quality which is quite as prominent in Metternich's private letters as in his more formal compositions is the disposition to indulge on all occasions in that wretched political cant which formed the dialect of diplomacy to the time of Palmerston and Bismarck. When dust was to be thrown in the eyes of an antagonist—when *anything* was to be gained by it—one can understand why this dialect should have been resorted to; but, in the intimate interchanges of family correspondence, what object was to be gained by this ceaseless talk about "principles," "moral motives," and "the always clear conscience"; and the repeated assurances that he is governed by "neither selfishness nor love of power," but is "inaccessible to ambition" of any kind? We are driven irresistibly to the conclusion that Metternich, in writing many of the letters, foresaw the precise use to which they have been put in these "memoirs"; and when we begin to suspect this, and find him declaring that throughout his life he was influenced only by "the love of truth which predominated in his feelings," we are tempted to revenge ourselves by recalling a couple of anecdotes, the memory of which has been recently revived by Karl Hillebrand: "M.

von Metternich is on the best road to being a statesman: he already lies quite beautifully," said Napoleon to Madame de Rémusat, respecting the young man of thirty; and Macaulay mentions, a generation later, that when some one at Lady Holland's compared the Chancellor with

Mazarin—whom by the way he profoundly despised—old Talleyrand wittily protested that "there was much to be said against that: in particular, the Cardinal deceived, but never lied; M. de Metternich always lies, and deceives nobody."

## KEBLE AND NEWMAN.

### I.

THE Tractarians' object, so far as they understood themselves, was to raise up the Church to resist the revolutionary tendency which they conceived to have set in with the Reform Bill; the effect of their work was to break the back of the resisting power which the Church already possessed, and to feed the fire which they hoped to extinguish. I go on to explain in detail what I mean.

When I went into residence at Oxford my brother was no longer alive. He had been abroad almost entirely for three or four years before his death; and although the atmosphere at home was full of the new opinions, and I heard startling things from time to time on transubstantiation, and such like, he had little to do with my direct education. I had read at my own discretion in my father's library. My own small judgment had been satisfied by Newton that the Pope was the Man of Sin; and Davison, to whom I was sent for a correction, had not removed the impression. I knew the "Faerie Queene" pretty well, and had understood who and what was meant by the False Duessa. I read Sharon Turner carefully, and also Gibbon, and had thus unconsciously been swallowing antidotes to Catholic doctrine. Of evangelical books, properly so called, I had seen nothing. Dissent in all its forms was a crime in our house. My father was too solid a man to be carried off his feet by the Oxford enthusiasm, but he was a High Churchman of the old school. The Church itself he regarded as part of the constitution; and the Prayer-book as an act of Parliament which only folly or disloyalty could quarrel with. My brother's notion of the evangelical clergy in the establishment must have been taken from some unfortunate specimens. He used to speak to them as "fellows who turned up the whites of their eyes, and said *Laud*." We had no copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress" in the house. I never read it till after I had grown up, and I am sorry that I did not make earlier acquaintance with it. Speculations about the Church and the sacra-

ments went into my head, but never much into my heart; and I fancy, perhaps idly, that I might have escaped some trials and some misfortunes if my spiritual imagination had been allowed food which would have agreed with it.

In my first term at the university, the controversial fires were beginning to blaze, but not as yet hotly. The authorities had not taken the alarm, but there was much talk and excitement, and neither the education nor the discipline of the place was benefited by it.

The triumvirs who became a national force, and gave its real character to the Oxford movement, were Keble, Pusey, and John Henry Newman. Newman himself was the moving power; the two others were powers also, but of inferior mental strength. Without the third, they would have been known as men of genius and learning. But their personal influence would have been limited to and have ended with themselves. Of Pusey I knew but little, and need not do more than mention him. Of Keble I can only venture to say a few words.

He had left residence at the time I speak of, but "The Christian Year" had made him famous. He was often in Oxford as Professor of Poetry, and I was allowed to see him. Cardinal Newman has alluded in his "Apologia" to the reverence which was felt for Keble. He is now an acknowledged saint of the English Church, admired and respected even by those who disagree with his theology. A college has been founded in commemoration of him, which bears his name; and "The Christian Year" itself has passed through more than a hundred editions, and is a household word in every family of the Anglican Episcopal communion, both at home and in America. It seems presumptuous to raise a doubt about the fitness of a recognition so marked and so universal. But the question is not of Keble's piety or genuineness of character. Both are established beyond the reach of cavil, and it would be absurd and ungracious to depreciate them. The intellectual and literary quality of his work, however, is a fair subject of criticism; and



I am heretical enough to believe that, although "The Christian Year" will always hold a high place in religious poetry, it owes its extraordinary popularity to temporary and accidental causes. Books which are immediately successful are those which catch and reflect the passing tones of opinion—all-absorbing while they last, but from their nature subject to change. The mass of men know little of other times or other ways of thinking than their own. Their minds are formed by the conditions of the present hour. Their greatest man is he who for the moment expresses most completely their own sentiments, and represents human life to them from their own point of view. The point of view shifts, conditions alter, fashions succeed fashions, and opinions opinions; and, having ourselves lost the clew, we read the writings which delighted our great-grandfathers with wonder at their taste. Each generation produces its own prophets, and great contemporary fame, except in a few extraordinary instances, is revenged by an undeserved completeness of neglect.

Very different in general is the reception of the works of true genius. A few persons appreciate them from the first. To the many they seem flavorless and colorless, deficient in all the qualities which for the moment are most admired. They pass unnoticed amid the meteors by which they are surrounded and eclipsed. But the meteors pass and they remain, and are seen gradually to be no vanishing coruscations, but new fixed stars, sources of genuine light, shining serenely for ever in the intellectual sky. They link the ages one to another in a common humanity. Virgil and Horace lived nearly two thousand years ago, and belonged to a society of which the outward form and fashion have utterly perished. But Virgil and Horace do not grow old, because while society changes men continue, and we recognize in reading them that the same heart beat under the toga which we feel in our own breasts. In the Roman Empire, too, there were contemporary popularities; men who were worshiped as gods, whose lightest word was treasured as a precious jewel—on whose breath millions hung expectant, who had temples built in their honor, who in their day were a power in the world. These are gone, while Horace remains—gone, dwindled into shadows. They were men, perhaps, of real worth, though of less than their admirers supposed, and they are now laughed at and moralized over in history as detected idols. As it was then, so it is now, and always will be. More copies of "Pickwick" were sold in five years than of "Hamlet" in two hundred. Yet "Hamlet" will last as long as the "Iliad"; "Pickwick," delightful as it is to us, will be unreadable to our great-grandchildren.

The most genial caricature ceases to interest when the thing caricatured has ceased to be.

I am not comparing "The Christian Year" to "Pickwick," but there are fashions in religion as there are fashions in other things. The Puritans would have found in it the savor of the mystic Babylon. We can not tell what English thought will be on these subjects in another century, but we may know if we are modest that it will not be identical with ours. Keble has made himself a name in history which will not be forgotten, and he will be remembered always as a person of singular piety, of inflexible integrity, and entire indifference to what is called fame or worldly advantages. He possessed besides, in an exceptional degree, the gift of expressing himself in the musical form which is called poetical. It is a form into which human thought naturally throws itself when it becomes emotional. It is the only form adequate to the expression of high intellectual passions. However powerful the intellect, however generous the heart, this particular faculty can alone convey to others what is passing in them, or give to spiritual beauty a body which is beautiful also. The poetic faculty thus secures to those who have it the admiration of every person; but it is to be remembered also that if the highest things can alone be fitly spoken of in poetry, all poetry is not necessarily of the highest things; and, if it can rise to the grandest subjects, it can lend its beauty also to the most commonplace. The prima donna wields the spell of an enchantress, though the words which she utters are nonsense; and poetry can make diamonds out of glass and gold out of ordinary metal. Keble was a representative of the devout mind of England. Religion as he grew to manhood was becoming self-conscious. It was passing out of its normal and healthy condition as the authoritative teacher of obedience to the commandments, into active anxiety about the speculative doctrines on which its graces were held to depend. Here, as in all other directions, the mental activity of the age was making itself felt. The evangelical movement was one symptom of it. The revival of sacramentalism was another, and found a voice in Keble. But this is all. We look in vain to him for any insight into the complicated problems of humanity, or for any sympathy with the passions which are the pulses of human life. With the Prayer-book for his guide, he has provided us with a manual of religious sentiment corresponding to the Christian theory as taught by the Church of England Prayer-book, beautifully expressed in language which every one can understand and remember. High Churchmanship had been hitherto dry and formal; Keble carried into it the emotions of evangelicalism,

while he avoided angry collision with evangelical opinions. Thus all parties could find much to admire in him, and little to suspect. English religious poetry was generally weak—was not, indeed, poetry at all. Here was something which in its kind was excellent; and every one who was really religious, or wished to be religious, or even outwardly and from habit professed himself and believed himself to be a Christian, found Keble's verses chime in his heart like church-bells.

"The Christian Year," however, could be all this, and yet notwithstanding it could be poetry of a particular period, and not for all time. Human nature remains the same; but religion alters. Christianity has taken many forms. In the early Church it had the hues of a hundred heresies. It developed in the successive councils. It has been Roman, it has been Greek, it has been Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian. It has adjusted itself to national characteristics; it has grown with the growth of general knowledge. Keble himself in his latest edition is found keeping pace with the progress of the times, and announcing that the hand as well as the heart receives the mystic presence in the Eucharist. He began to write for Church people as they were sixty years ago. The Church of England has traveled far since 1820. The "Highest" rector then alive would have gone into convulsions if his curate had spoken to him about "celebrating" mass. The most advanced Biblical critic would have closed the Speaker's commentary with dismay or indignation. Changed opinions will bring change of feelings, and fresh poets to set the feelings to music. "The Christian Year" has reigned without a rival through two generations, but "the rhymes" are not of the powerful sort which will "outlive the pyramids," and the qualities which have given them their immediate influence will equally forbid their immortality.

The limitations of Keble's poetry were visible in a still higher degree in himself. He was not far-seeing, his mind moved in the groove of a single order of ideas. He could not place himself in the position of persons who disagreed with him, and thus he could never see the strong points of their arguments. Particular ways of thinking he dismissed as wicked, although in his summary condemnation he might be striking some of the ablest and most honest men in Europe. If he had not been Keble he would have been called (treason though it be to write the words) narrow-minded. Circumstances independent of himself could alone have raised him into a leader of a party. For the more delicate functions of such an office he was constitutionally unfit, and when appealed to for advice and assist-

ance by disciples who were in difficulties his answers were beside the purpose. He could not give to others what he did not himself possess. Plato, in the "Dialogue of the Io," describes an ingenious young Athenian searching desperately for some one who would teach him to be wise. Failing elsewhere, he goes to the poets. Those he thought who could say such fine things in their verses would be able to tell him in prose what wisdom consisted in. Their conversation unfortunately proved as profitless as that of the philosophers; and the youth concluded that the poetry came from divine inspiration, and that when off the sacred tripod they were but common men. Disappointment could not chill the admiration which the inquirer would continue to feel for so venerable a teacher as Keble, but of practical light that would be useful to him he often gathered as little as the Athenian. Even as a poet Keble was subjective only. He had no variety of note, and nothing which was not in harmony with his own theological school had intellectual interest for him.

To his immediate friends he was genial, affectionate, and possibly instructive, but he had no faculty for winning the unconverted. If he was not bigoted, he was intensely prejudiced. If you did not agree with him, there was something morally wrong with you, and your "natural man" was provoked into resistance. To speak habitually with authority does not necessarily indicate an absence of humility, but does not encourage the growth of that quality. If there had been no "movement," as it was called, if Keble had remained a quiet country clergyman, unconscious that he was a great man, and uncalled on to guide the opinions of his age, he would have commanded perhaps more enduring admiration. The knot of followers who specially attached themselves to him show traces of his influence in a disposition not only to think the views which they hold sound in themselves, but to regard those who think differently as their intellectual inferiors. Keble was incapable of vanity in the vulgar sense. But there was a subtle self-sufficiency in him which has come out more distinctly in his school.

I remember an instance of Keble's narrowness extremely characteristic of him. A member of a family with which he had been intimate had adopted liberal opinions in theology. Keble probably did not know what those opinions were, but regarded this person as an apostate who had sinned against light. He came to call one day when the erring brother happened to be at home; and, learning that he was in the house, he refused to enter, and remained sitting in the porch. St. John is reported to have fled out of a bath at Ephesus on hearing that the heretic Cerinthus

was under the roof. Keble, I presume, remembered the story, and acted like the apostle.

The inability to appreciate the form of arguments which he did not like saved him from Rome, but did not save him from Roman doctrine. It would, perhaps, have been better if he had left the Church of England, instead of remaining there to shelter behind his high authority a revolution in its teaching. The mass has crept back among us, with which we thought we had done for ever, and the honorable name of Protestant, once our proudest distinction, has been made over to the Church of Scotland and the Dissenters.

Far different from Keble, from my brother, from Dr. Pusey, from all the rest, was the true chief of the Catholic revival—John Henry Newman. Compared with him, they all were but as ciphers, and he the indicating number. The times I speak of are far distant; the actors and the stormy passions which bubbled round them are long dead and forgotten among new excitements. Newman, too, for many years had dropped silent, and disappeared from the world's eyes. He came out again in a conflict with a dear friend of mine, who, on my account partly (at least, in reviewing a book which I had written), provoked a contest with him, and *impar congressus Achilli* seemed to have been foiled. Charles Kingsley is gone from us. English readers know now what he was, and from me or from any one he needs no further panegyric. In that one instance he conducted his case unskillfully. He was wrong in his estimate of the character of his antagonist, whose integrity was as unblemished as his own. But the last word has still to be spoken on the essential question which was at issue between them. The immediate result was the publication of the famous "Apologia," a defense personally of Newman's own life and actions, and next of the Catholic cause. The writer of it is again a power in modern society, a prince of the Church; surrounded, if he appears in public, with adoring crowds, fine ladies going on their knees before him, in London *salons*. Himself of most modest nature, he never sought greatness, but greatness found him in spite of himself. To him, if to any one man, the world owes the intellectual recovery of Romanism. Fifty years ago it was in England a dying creed, lingering in retirement in the halls and chapels of a few half-forgotten families. A shy Oxford student has come out on its behalf into the field of controversy, armed with the keenest weapons of modern learning and philosophy, and wins illustrious converts, and has kindled hopes that England herself, the England of Elizabeth and Cromwell, will kneel for absolution again before the Father of Christen-

dom. Mr. Buckle questioned whether any great work has ever been done in this world by an individual man. Newman, by the solitary force of his own mind, has produced this extraordinary change. What he has done we all see; what will come of it our children will see. Of the magnitude of the phenomenon itself no reasonable person can doubt. Two writers have affected powerfully the present generation of Englishmen. Newman is one, Thomas Carlyle is the other. But Carlyle has been at issue with all the tendencies of his age. Like a John the Baptist, he has stood alone preaching repentance in a world which is to him a wilderness: Newman has been the voice of the intellectual reaction of Europe, which was alarmed by an era of revolutions, and is looking for safety in the forsaken beliefs of the ages which it had been tempted to despise.

The "Apologia" is the most beautiful of autobiographies, but it tells us only how the writer appeared to himself. We who were his contemporaries can alone say how he appeared to us in the old days at Oxford.

## II.

WHEN I entered at Oxford John Henry Newman was beginning to be famous. The responsible authorities were watching him with anxiety; clever men were looking with interest and curiosity on the apparition among them of one of those persons of indisputable genius who was likely to make a mark upon his time. His appearance was striking. He was above the middle height, slight and spare. His head was large, his face remarkably like that of Julius Cæsar. The forehead, the shape of the ears and nose were almost the same. The lines of the mouth were very peculiar, and I should say exactly the same. I have often thought of the resemblance, and believed that it extended to the temperament. In both there was an original force of character which refused to be molded by circumstances, which was to make its own way, and become a power in the world; a clearness of intellectual perception, a disdain for conventionalities, a temper imperious and willful, but along with it a most attaching gentleness, sweetness, singleness of heart and purpose. Both were formed by nature to command others, both had the faculty of attracting to themselves the passionate devotion of their friends and followers, and in both cases, too, perhaps the devotion was rather due to the personal ascendancy of the leader than to the cause which he represented. It was Cæsar, not the principle of the empire, which overthrew Pompey and the constitution. *Credo in Newmannum* was a common phrase at Oxford, and

is still unconsciously the faith of nine tenths of the English converts to Rome.

When I first saw him he had written his book upon the Arians. An accidental application had set him upon it, at a time, I believe, when he had half resolved to give himself to science and mathematics, and had so determined him into a theological career. He had published a volume or two of parochial sermons. A few short poems of his had also appeared in "The British Magazine" under the signature of "Delta," which were reprinted in "The Lyra Apostolica." They were unlike any other religious poetry which was then extant. It was hard to say why they were so fascinating. They had none of the musical grace of "The Christian Year." They were not harmonious; the meter halted, the rhymes were irregular, yet there was something in them which seized the attention, and would not let it go. Keble's verses flowed in soft cadence over the mind, delightful, as sweet sounds are delightful, but are forgotten as the vibrations die away. Newman's had pierced into the heart and mind, and there remained. The literary critics of the day were puzzled. They saw that he was not an ordinary man; what sort of an extraordinary man he was they could not tell. "The eye of Melpomene has been cast upon him," said the omniscient (I think) "Athenæum";\* "but the glance was not fixed or steady." The eye of Melpomene had extremely little to do in the matter. Here were thoughts like no other man's thoughts, and emotions like no other man's emotions. Here was a man who really believed his creed, and let it follow him into all his observations upon outward things. He had been traveling in Greece; he had carried with him his recollections of Thucydides, and, while his companions were sketching olive-gardens and old castles and picturesque harbors at Corfu, Newman was recalling the scenes which those harbors had witnessed thousands of years ago in the civil wars which the Greek historian has made immortal. There was nothing in this that was unusual. Any one with a well-stored memory is affected by historical scenery. But Newman was oppressed with the sense that the men who had fallen in that desperate strife were still alive, as much as he and his friends were alive:

"Their spirits live in awful singleness,"

he says,

"Each in its self-formed sphere of light or gloom."

We should all, perhaps, have acknowledged this

\* Perhaps it was not the "Athenæum." I quote from memory. I remember the passage from the amusement which it gave me; but it was between forty and fifty years ago, and I have never seen it since.

in words. It is happy for us that we do not all realize what the words mean. The minds of most of us would break under the strain.

Other conventional beliefs, too, were quickened into startling realities. We had been hearing much in those days about the benevolence of the Supreme Being, and our corresponding obligation to charity and philanthropy. If the received creed was true, benevolence was by no means the only characteristic of that Being. What God loved we might love; but there were things which God did not love; accordingly, we found Newman saying to us:

"Christian, wouldst thou learn to love;  
First learn thee how to hate.

"Hatred of sin and zeal and fear  
Lead up the Holy Hill;  
Track them, till charity appear  
A self-denial still."

It was not austerity that made him speak so. No one was more essentially tender-hearted; but he took the usually accepted Christian account of man and his destiny to be literally true, and the terrible character of it weighed upon him.

"Sunt lacrymæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."

He could be gentle enough in other moods. "Lead, kindly Light," is the most popular hymn in the language. All of us, Catholic, Protestant, or such as can see their way to no positive creed at all, can here meet on common ground and join in a common prayer. Familiar as the lines are, they may here be written down once more:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom  
Lead thou me on.  
The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
Lead thou me on.  
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
Far distant scenes—one step enough for me.

"I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou  
Shouldst lead me on.  
I loved to choose and see my path; but now  
Lead thou me on.  
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

"So long thy power hath blest us, sure it will  
Still lead us on,  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel-faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

It has been said that men of letters are either much less or much greater than their writings. Cleverness and the skillful use of other people's thoughts produce works which take us in till we see the authors, and then we are disenchanted. A man of genius, on the other hand, is a spring



in which there is always more behind than flows from it. The painting or the poem is but a part of him inadequately realized, and his nature expresses itself, with equal or fuller completeness, in his life, his conversation, and personal presence. This was eminently true of Newman. Greatly as his poetry had struck me, he was himself all that the poetry was, and something far beyond. I had then never seen so impressive a person. I met him now and then in private; I attended his church and heard him preach Sunday after Sunday; he is supposed to have been insidious, to have led his disciples on to conclusions to which he designed to bring them, while his purpose was carefully veiled. He was, on the contrary, the most transparent of men. He told us what he believed to be true. He did not know where it would carry him. No one who has ever risen to any great height in this world refuses to move till he knows where he is going. He is impelled in each step which he takes by a force within himself. He satisfies himself only that the step is a right one, and he leaves the rest to Providence. Newman's mind was world-wide. He was interested in everything which was going on in science, in politics, in literature. Nothing was too large for him, nothing too trivial, if it threw light upon the central question, what man really was, and what was his destiny. He was careless about his personal prospects. He had no ambition to make a career, or to rise to rank and power. Still less had pleasure any seductions for him. His natural temperament was bright and light; his senses, even the commonest, were exceptionally delicate. I was told that, though he rarely drank wine, he was trusted to choose the vintages for the college cellar. He could admire enthusiastically any greatness of action and character, however remote the sphere of it from his own. Gurwood's "Dispatches of the Duke of Wellington" came out just then. Newman had been reading the book, and a friend asked him what he thought of it. "Think?" he said, "it makes one burn to have been a soldier." But his own subject was the absorbing interest with him. Where Christianity is a real belief, where there are distinct convictions that a man's own self and the millions of human beings who are playing on the earth's surface are the objects of a supernatural dispensation, and are on the road to heaven or hell, the most powerful mind may well be startled at the aspect of things. If Christianity was true, since Christianity was true (for Newman at no time doubted the reality of the revelation), then modern England, modern Europe, with its march of intellect and its useful knowledge and its material progress, was advancing with a light heart into ominous conditions. Keble had looked into no lines of thought but his own. Newman had read

omnivorously; he had studied modern thought and modern life in all its forms, and with all its many-colored passions. He knew, of course, that many men of learning and ability believed that Christianity was not a revelation at all, but had been thrown out, like other creeds, in the growth of the human mind. He knew that doubts of this kind were the inevitable results of free discussion and free toleration of differences of opinion; and he was too candid to attribute such doubts, as others did, to wickedness of heart. He could not, being what he was, acquiesce in the established religion as he would acquiesce in the law of the land, because it was there, and because the country had accepted it, and because good general reasons could be given for assuming it to be right. The soundest arguments, even the arguments of Bishop Butler himself, went no further than to establish a probability. But religion with Newman was a personal thing between himself and his Maker, and it was not possible to feel love and devotion to a Being whose existence was merely probable; as Carlyle says of himself when in a similar condition, a religion which was not a certainty was a mockery and a horror; and, unshaken and unshakable as his own convictions were, Newman evidently was early at a loss for the intellectual grounds on which the claims of Christianity to abstract belief could be based. The Protestant was satisfied with the Bible, the original text of which, and perhaps the English translation, he regarded as inspired. But the inspiration itself was an assumption, and had to be proved; and Newman, though he believed the inspiration, seems to have recognized earlier than most of his contemporaries that the Bible was not a single book, but a national literature, produced at intervals, during many hundred years, and under endless varieties of circumstances. Protestant and Catholic alike appealed to it; and they could not both be right. Yet, if the differences between them were essential, there must be some authority capable of deciding between them. The Anglican Church had a special theology of its own, professing to be based on the Bible. Yet, to suppose that each individual, left to himself, would gather out of the Bible, if able and conscientious, exactly these opinions, and no others, was absurd and contrary to experience. There were the creeds; but on what authority did the creeds rest? On the four councils? or on other councils, and, if other, on which? Was it on the Church, and, if so, on what Church? The Church of the fathers? or the Church still present and alive and speaking? If for living men, among whom new questions were perpetually rising, a Church which was also living could not be dispensed with, then what was that Church, and to what conclusions would such an admission lead us?

With us undergraduates Newman, of course, did not enter on such important questions, although they were in the air, and we talked about them among ourselves. He, when we met him, spoke to us about subjects of the day, of literature, of public persons and incidents, of everything which was generally interesting. He seemed always to be better informed on common topics of conversation than any one else who was present. He was never condescending with us, never didactic or authoritative; but what he said carried conviction along with it. When we were wrong he knew why we were wrong, and excused our mistakes to ourselves while he set us right. Perhaps his supreme merit as a talker was that he never tried to be witty or to say striking things. Ironical he could be, but not ill natured. Not a malicious anecdote was ever heard from him. Prosy he could not be. He was lightness itself—the lightness of elastic strength—and he was interesting because he never talked for talking's sake, but because he had something real to say.

Thus it was that we, who had never seen such another man, and to whom he appeared, perhaps, at special advantage in contrast with the normal college don, came to regard Newman with the affection of pupils (though pupils, strictly speaking, he had none) for an idolized master. The simplest word which dropped from him was treasured as if it had been an intellectual diamond. For hundreds of young men *Credo in Neumannum* was the genuine symbol of faith.

Personal admiration, of course, inclined us to look to him as a guide in matters of religion. No one who heard his sermons in those days can ever forget them. They were seldom directly theological. We had theology enough and to spare from the select preachers before the university. Newman, taking some Scripture character for a text, spoke to us about ourselves, our temptations, our experiences. His illustrations were inexhaustible. He seemed to be addressing the most secret consciousness of each of us—as the eyes of a portrait appear to look at every person in a room. He never exaggerated; he was never unreal. A sermon from him was a poem, formed on a distinct idea, fascinating by its subtilty, welcome—how welcome!—from its sincerity, interesting from its originality, even to those who were careless of religion, and to others who wished to be religious, but had found religion dry and wearisome, it was like the springing of a fountain out of the rock.

The hearts of men vibrate in answer to one another like the strings of musical instruments. These sermons were, I suppose, the records of Newman's own mental experience. They appear to me to be the outcome of continued meditation upon his fellow-creatures and their posi-

tion in this world; their awful responsibilities; the mystery of their nature, strangely mixed of good and evil, of strength and weakness. A tone, not of fear, but of infinite pity, runs through them all, and along with it a resolution to look facts in the face; not to fly to evasive generalities about infinite mercy and benevolence, but to examine what revelation really has added to our knowledge, either of what we are or of what lies before us. We were met on all sides with difficulties; for experience did not confirm, it rather contradicted, what revelation appeared distinctly to assert. I recollect a sermon from him—I think in the year 1839—I have never read it since; I may not now remember the exact words, but the impression left is ineffaceable. It was on the trials of faith, of which he gave different illustrations. He supposed, first, two children to be educated together, of similar temperament and under similar conditions, one of whom was baptized and the other unbaptized. He represented them as growing up equally amiable, equally upright, equally reverent and God-fearing, with no outward evidence that one was in a different spiritual condition from the other; yet we were required to believe not only that their condition was totally different, but that one was a child of God, and his companion was not.

Again, he drew a sketch of the average men and women who made up society, whom we ourselves encountered in daily life, or were connected with, or read about in newspapers. They were neither special saints nor special sinners. Religious men had faults, and often serious ones. Men careless of religion were often amiable in private life, good husbands, good fathers, steady friends, in public honorable, brave, and patriotic. Even in the worst and wickedest, in a witch of Endor, there was a human heart and human tenderness. None seemed good enough for heaven, none so bad as to deserve to be consigned to the company of evil spirits, and to remain in pain and misery for ever. Yet all these people were, in fact, divided one from the other by an invisible line of separation. If they were to die on the spot as they actually were, some would be saved, the rest would be lost—the saved to have eternity of happiness, the lost to be with the devils in hell.

Again, I am not sure whether it was on the same occasion, but it was in following the same line of thought, Newman described closely some of the incidents of our Lord's passion; he then paused. For a few moments there was a breathless silence. Then, in a low, clear voice, of which the faintest vibration was audible in the farthest corner of St. Mary's, he said, "Now, I bid you recollect that he to whom these things were done was Almighty God." It was as if an elec-

tric stroke had gone through the church, as if every person present understood for the first time the meaning of what he had all his life been saying. I suppose it was an epoch in the mental history of more than one of my Oxford contemporaries.

Another sermon left its mark upon me. It was upon evidence. I had supposed up to that time that the chief events related in the Gospels were as well authenticated as any other facts of history. I had read Paley and Grotius at school, and their arguments had been completely satisfactory to me. The Gospels had been written by apostles or companions of apostles. There was sufficient evidence, in Paley's words, "that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles had passed their lives in labors, dangers, and sufferings in attestation of the accounts which they delivered." St. Paul was a further and independent authority. It was not conceivable that such men as St. Paul and the other apostles evidently were should have conspired to impose a falsehood upon the world, and should have succeeded in doing it undetected in an age exceptionally cultivated and skeptical. Gibbon I had studied also, and had thought about the five causes by which he explained how Christianity came to be believed; but they had seemed to me totally inadequate. I was something more than surprised, therefore, when I heard Newman say that Hume's argument against the credibility of miracles was logically sound. The laws of nature, so far as could be observed, were uniform, and in any given instance it *was* more likely as a mere matter of evidence that men should deceive or be deceived, than that those laws should have been deviated from. Of course, he did not leave the matter in this position. Hume goes on to say that he is speaking of evidence as addressed to the reason; the Christian religion addresses itself to faith, and the credibility of it is, therefore, unaffected by his objection. What Hume said in irony Newman accepted in earnest. Historically the proofs were insufficient, or sufficient only to create a sense of probability. Christianity was apprehended by a faculty essentially different. It was called faith. But what was faith, and on what did it rest? Was it as if mankind had been born with but four senses, by which to form their notions of things external to them, and that a fifth sense of sight was suddenly conferred on favored individuals, which converted conjecture into certainty? I could not tell. For myself this way of putting the matter gave me no new sense at all, and only taught me to distrust my old ones.

I say at once that I think it was injudicious of Newman to throw out before us thus abruptly an opinion so extremely agitating. I explain it

by supposing that here, as elsewhere, his sermons contained simply the workings of his own mind, and were a sort of public confession which he made as he went along. I suppose that something of this kind had been passing through him. He was in advance of his time. He had studied the early fathers; he had studied Church history, and the lives of the saints and martyrs. He knew that the hard and fast line which Protestants had drawn at which miracles had ceased was one which no historical canon could reasonably defend. Stories of the exercise of supernatural power ran steadily from the beginning to the latest period of the Church's existence; many of them were as well supported by evidence as the miracles of the New Testament; and, if reason was to be the judge, no arbitrary separation of the age of the apostles from the age of their successors was possible. Some of these stories might be inventions, or had no adequate authority for them; but for others there was authority of eye-witnesses; and, if these were to be set aside by a peremptory act of will as unworthy of credit, the Gospel miracles themselves might fall before the same methods. The argument of Hume was already silently applied to the entire post-apostolic period. It had been checked by the traditionary reverence for the Bible. But this was not reason; it was faith. Perhaps, too, he saw that the alternative did not lie as sharply as Paley supposed, between authentic fact and deliberate fraud. Legends might grow; they grew every day, about common things and persons, without intention to deceive. Imagination, emotion, affection, or, on the other side, fear and animosity, are busy with the histories of men who have played a remarkable part in the world. Great historic figures—a William Tell, for instance—have probably had no historical existence at all, and yet are fastened indelibly into national traditions. Such reflections as these would make it evident that if the Christian miracles were to be believed, not as possibly or probably true, but as indisputably true—true in such a sense that a man's life on earth, and his hope for the future, could be securely based upon them—the history must be guaranteed by authority different in kind from the mere testimony to be gathered out of books. I suppose every thinking person would now acknowledge this to be true. And we see, in fact, that Christians of various persuasions supplement the evidence in several ways. Some assume the verbal inspiration of the Bible; others are conscious of personal experiences which make doubt impossible. Others, again, appeal justly to the existence of Christianity as a fact, and to the power which it has exerted in elevating and humanizing mankind. Newman found what he wanted in the living authority of the

Church, in the existence of an organized body which had been instituted by our Lord himself, and was still actively present among us as a living witness of the truth. Thus the imperfection of the outward evidence was itself an argument for the Catholic theory. All religious people were agreed that the facts of the Gospel narrative really happened as they were said to have happened. Proof there must be somewhere to justify the conviction; and proof could only be found in the admission that the Church, the organized Church with its bishops and priests, was not a human institution, but was the living body through which the Founder of Christianity himself was speaking to us.

Such, evidently, was one use to which Hume's objection could be applied, and, to those who, like Newman, were provided with the antidote, there was no danger in admitting the force of it. Nor would the risk have been great with his hearers if they had been playing with the question as a dialectical exercise. But he had made them feel and think seriously about it by his own intense earnestness, and, brought up as most of them had been to believe that Christianity had sufficient historical evidence for it, to be suddenly told that the famous argument against miracles was logically valid after all was at least startling. The Church theory, as making good a testimony otherwise defective, was new to most of us, and not very readily taken in. To remove the foundation of a belief, and to substitute another, is like putting new foundations to a house.

The house itself may easily be overthrown in the process. I have said before that in a healthy state of things religion is considered too sacred to be argued about. It is believed as a matter of duty, and the why or the wherefore is not so much as thought about. Revolutions are not far off when men begin to ask whence the sovereign derives his authority. Skepticism is not far off when they ask why they believe their creed. We had all been satisfied about the Gospel history; not a shadow of doubt had crossed the minds of one of us; and, though we might not have been able to give a logical reason for our certitude, the certitude was in us, and might well have been let alone. I, for one, began to read Hume attentively, and, though old associations prevented me from recognizing the full force of what he had to say, no doubt I was unconsciously affected by him. It must have been so, for I remember soon after insisting to a friend that the essential part of religion was morality. My friend replied that morality was only possible to persons who received power through faith to keep the commandments. But this did not satisfy me, for it seemed contrary to fact. There were persons of great excellence whose spiritual beliefs were utterly different. I could not bring myself to admit that the goodness, for instance, of a Unitarian was only apparent. After all is said, the visible conduct of men is the best test that we can have of their inward condition. If not the best, where are we to find a better?

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE (*Good Words*).

### A NEW ENGLISH POET.\*

THE arrival of a new poet who has something new to say, or who sets the discourse of old matters to new music, has not been a frequent thing of late—in English literature, at least—and we are ready to rub our eyes now, and look sharply at the first portent of this kind that makes its appearance. Without doubting that, out of the rich soil which has produced in recent times Wordsworth and Tennyson, there are many further fruitful poetic growths to arise, it must be confessed that the tendency of men-

tal activity, of late, has been most noticeable in the sphere of science, and is least prominent in the field of the imagination. A few of the English critical journals, however, profess lately to have found a real poet, and more; and think they can discern him in Mr. Thomson, whose two books furnishing them their evidence have but just appeared—the first having been followed by the second within a very few weeks. But, though the books themselves are so new, the poems which distend their covers into only moderate dimensions have been dropped from time to time into the various magazines from as far back as 1857.

We do not know, of course, who Mr. Thomson is, except that he is the author of this body of verse—using when it was separately published

\* The City of Dreadful Night and other Poems. By James Thomson. London: Reeves & Turner, 196 Strand, 1880.

Vane's Story. Weddah and Om-El-Bonain, and other Poems. By James Thomson. London: Reeves & Turner, 196 Strand, 1881.



the signature of "B. V."—and that he is, on the probable supposition that his earliest effort here was produced no earlier than in his later teens, already over forty years of age. It is our purpose to emphasize this point; because, while some difference of literary quality in the various pieces is to be observed, the reader may, by keeping the foregoing fact in mind, take notice that the one chord of despair which began with the earliest poem is struck through them all to the very last.

"The City of Dreadful Night," which gives the title to the first volume, furnishes the key-note to all that Mr. Thomson has to offer. It shows our author to be a determined, if not a pre-determined, pessimist. The world which he depicts, which is supposed to be the world we all live in, is one without faith, hope, or love, or any good thing. But let us quote from the poem, any part of which is as good as any other for this showing:

"The City is of Night; perchance of Death,  
But certainly of Night; for never there  
Can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath  
After the dewy dawning's cold gray air;  
The moon and stars may shine with scorn or pity;  
The sun has never visited that city,  
For it dissolveth in the daylight fair."

The poem is allegorical, and much of its elaborate machinery of symbolism is distressingly vague and incoherent. The desert of human misery is thus described in another place:

"As I came through the desert thus it was,  
As I came through the desert: All was black,  
In heaven no single star, on earth no track;  
A brooding hush without a stir or note.  
The air so thick it clotted in my throat;  
And thus for hours: then some enormous things  
Swooped past with savage cries and clanging wings:  
But I strode on austere;  
No hope could have no fear."

"As I came through the desert thus it was,  
As I came through the desert: Eyes of fire  
Glared at me throbbing with a starved desire;  
The hoarse and heavy and carnivorous breath  
Was hot upon me from deep jaws of death;  
Sharp claws, swift talons. Restless fingers cold  
Plucked at me from the bushes, tried to hold:  
But I strode on austere;  
No hope could have no fear."

"As I came through the desert thus it was,  
As I came through the desert: Meteors ran  
And crossed their javelins on the black sky-span;  
The zenith opened to a gulf of flame,  
The dreadful thunderbolts jarred earth's fixed  
frame;

The ground all heaved in waves of fire that surged  
And weltered round me, sole there unsubmerged:  
Yet I strode on austere;  
No hope could have no fear."

The poem ranges through several meters, but with one persistent monotone, and at last a sphinx and an angel come together—the former staring the latter out of existence—and we find the meaning of the poem to be—

"The sense that every struggle brings defeat,  
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;  
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat,  
Because they have no secret to express;  
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain  
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;  
That all is vanity and nothingness."

And yet we dare to say Mr. Thomson is tolerably well and hearty; and, whether he lives in London or in the country, manages to dispose of good dinners, discerns at times some beauties in art or nature, nourishes some tender friendships, and is not worse off, perhaps, on the average, than the rest of us. In "Two Sonnets," printed in the second volume, he ventures to tell us why he sings so sadly:

"A spirit lifts me where I lie alone,  
And thrills me into song by its own laws;  
That which I feel but seldom know, indeed,  
Tempering the melody it could not cause."

"Striving to sing glad songs, I but attain  
Wild discords sadder than grief's saddest tune;  
As if an owl with his harsh screech should strain  
To over-gratulate a thrush of June:

"My mirth can laugh and talk, but can not sing;  
My grief finds harmonies in everything."

The more important poems in the earlier volume are "To our Ladies of Death," "The Naked Goddess," and "The Lord of the Castle of Indolence." The second of these has as little somberness, perhaps, as any of the three, and is clothed in graceful diction, and sparkles with some pleasant fancies. In "Life's Hebe" a very pretty conceit is quite prettily caught and carried out; and, though not without the costume of shadow, shows as "Virtue and Vice" and many of the briefer pieces do, that Mr. Thomson has the power to do good lyrical work if he chooses. In fact his longer pieces, with their fondness for allegory, are not without positive technical merit too, and poised beauty of expression. They give assurance that this writer might do something of real worth—something which sane minds could welcome, if it were possible for him to escape from the spiritual neurasthenia—the dumps and the dolours—in which he so delights to revel.

The rollicking poems of "Sunday at Hampstead" and "Sunday up the River" almost seem as if they wished to let in the sunlight; but they appear to us a little too crude in form, and are grotesquely coarse in certain passages. This volume closes with some modestly titled "Attempts at Translation from Heine," which, as we should easily have expected, are quite admirably done. The mocking sarcasm and light raillery of Heine are in close accordance with Mr. Thomson's own natural vein, and he has taken elsewhere no pains to conceal his sympathy with this genuine but morbid genius. He quotes from him in "Vane's Story," in the second of these volumes, and absorbs his spirit in quite a considerable portion of his own original lines. He calls him

"Our poor Saint Heinrich! So he was  
A saint here of the loftiest class,  
By martyrdom more dreadfully solemn  
Than that of Simeon on the column."

"Vane's Story" is the account of a nightmare or phantasmagorical dream introduced by a lady's kiss. Before the dreamer wakes, he finds himself taking part in a dance at a ball. The pleasant salutation as he lay on the sofa gives him a few pleasant thoughts; for he says:

"My partner was no icy corse,  
No phantom of a wild remorse,  
No Lamia of delicious dream,  
No nymph of forest, sea, or stream:  
A soul of fire, a lovely form  
Lithe to the dance and breathing warm;  
A face that flushed with cordial pleasure,  
Dove-feet that flew in perfect measure;  
A little hand so soft and fine,  
Whose touch electric thrilled through mine;  
A heart that beat against my breast  
Full pulses of triumphant zest;  
Deep eyes, pure eyes, as dark as night,  
Yet full of liquid love and light,  
Where their moon-soul came floating through  
The clouds of mystery into view,  
And myriad star-rays glittering keen  
Were tempered in its mystic sheen.

The splendid beauty of her face,  
Her dancing's proud and passionate grace,  
Her soul's eternal life intense  
Lavishly poured through every sense,  
Intoxicated all the air,  
Inspiring every dancer there:  
Never again shall that old hall  
Stir round with such another ball.

Our noble orchestra of four  
Played as they never played of yore,  
Played as they will play nevermore,  
As if the waking air were cloven  
By all the legions of Beethoven."

We have quoted this chiefly to give a sample of the construction of the poem which titles the second volume; but its moral purpose and its meaning are alike vague, and, to use the author's favorite word, "tenebrous" in the extreme. By far the most unobjectionable production, the most perfect, we may say, taking all points of view into consideration, in Mr. Thomson's two books, is "Weddah and Om-El-Bonain." This is an Arabic love-story, taken from the "De l'Amour" of De Stendhal (Henri Beyle), and by him taken from "The Divan of Love," compiled by Ebn-Abi-Hadglat.

The argument runs somewhat like this: Two young persons, a boy and a girl, of that famous tribe of Azra, who are so tender in loving that the Arabic proverb says "they die when they love," grew up together. They

"Were known where'er the Azra tribe was known,  
Through Araby and all the neighboring lands;  
Were chanted in the songs of sweetest tone  
Which sprang like fountains 'mid the desert sands.  
They were so beautiful that none who saw,  
But felt a rapture trembling into awe."

But, when they were almost man and woman, Walid, the Syrian chief, sees the maiden, and wins her away from Weddah after desperate pleading and struggle with her father, but against her will. Still, she yields a forced consent, and the Syrian chief takes her home. Weddah and Walid both fight in battle, not against each other as they might have wished, but on the same side in the interest of the Azra tribe, and both win equal honors. Though Walid has taken the maiden away with him to his distant home, Weddah after a while follows and becomes a merchant — thoroughly disguised, however — in the town where Walid lives. A maid-servant of Om-El-Bonain brings the early lovers in due time together; they are discovered; and, of course, the death of both results. On this outline, with its various episodes, Mr. Thomson has succeeded in making a poem of somewhat unique quality and indisputable power. It is sad, of course, with seething passion and bitter fate, or Mr. Thomson would not have chosen the theme; but the fixed limits of the Arabic original have served to give it a coherence, a want of which is one of the marked deficiencies in our author's more exclusively original work. Delicate touches of fancy and verses of rare beauty are quite frequent in it, and the high plane of merit attained in the first stanza is well kept up to the end. Even Om-El-Bonain's maid-servant is described as

"A frank-eyed girl, whose bosom was a wave  
Whereon love's lotus lightly rose and fell."

This maid-servant describes to her mistress her old lover Weddah, whom she has discovered, now playing the merchant, as follows :

" I saw a merchant : never chief or king  
Of form so noble visited our land ;  
He wore a little ring, a lady's ring,  
On the last finger of a feared right hand ;  
Some woe enormous overshadowing  
Made beauty terrible that had been bland :  
He was convulsed when he would speak your  
name,  
*From such abysses of his heart it came.*"

The following stanza, pointing a moral, is, perhaps, worth quoting, though not better than many others :

" And would you know why empires break asunder,  
Why peoples perish and proud cities fall ?  
Seek not the captains where the steed-clouds  
thunder,  
Seek not the elders in the council-hall ;  
But seek the chamber where some shining wonder  
Of delicate beauty nestles, far from all  
The turmoil, toying with adornments queenly,  
And murmuring songs of tender love serenely."

In "L'Ancien Régime," or, "The Good Old Rule," a piece of moderate brevity, our author hits the character of the traditional and unbeloved monarch—a hated kingly head—with no mean ability and with pungent force. It is a fairly striking production, and might cause the blood of liberty or reprobation to tingle in the most sluggish vein. The memorial verses on "E. B. B." have also an appropriate significance (Elizabeth Barrett Browning is the subject); but here, as in frequent other instances, there is a certain realistic baldness in the verse that makes it just miss the requisite melody. In none of the poems, long or brief—and there are many we shall have no opportunity to even mention—do you find the luxuriant, airy wing-power of Swinburne, the rich quality of Rossetti, or the captivating magic of Morris, when Morris is at his best. There are passages in all these writers we are sometimes compelled to remember and repeat; but in Mr. Thomson it is not the phrase or the form or the meaning that stays by us, so much as the murky gloom and the dark and formless atmosphere.

Mr. Thomson dedicates "The City of Dreadful Night" "to the memory of the younger brother of Dante, Giacomo Leopardi, a spirit as lofty, a genius as intense, with a yet more tragic doom"; and the newer volume he inscribes "to the memory of the poet of poets, and purest of men, Percy Bysshe Shelley, with the gratitude and love and reverence of the author."

It is not for us to say how far the picturesque apotheosis of melancholy is 'natural to this author, or how much of it is affectation and posture. The problems of evil and human existence are as old as the world itself; and, long before Leopardi and Shelley and the whole weeping choir of modern times had uttered a wail or note, the sepulchral singer of grief and despair was a frequent and periodically recurring phenomenon. Omar Khayyam voiced this philosophy hundreds of years ago, and not one of his successors has done it with more touching pensiveness, or set its perspective in finer shades of gloom and darkness. We listen to his melody, but it passes like a ripple on the ocean; there is neither nutriment nor permanence in it. One passage from Shakespeare, or one breath from Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," or one of Milton's best sonnets, is worth the whole body of this bibliography of grief. It would bring Mr. Thomson untold benefits if he should read sympathetically Shakespeare's matchless utterances upon the scheme of Nature and life which now so bewilders him, and imbibe their health and wholeness. Or he would gain immeasurably if he should take up the tone of his namesake and brother bard of an older time, and go out from his own mephitic catacombs and charnel-house into the bright sunshine with the author of "The Seasons." He has gifts and an ear for melody, and a strength of both fancy and imagination which could be made eminently serviceable, if he could be taught how to apply them. But a hundred years of this singing which he offers will never place him on any high or secure pedestal of the English Parnassus. Nothing is more inevitably true than the fact that moral as well as physical suicide ends in death, and that, as some writer has well said, the disparagement of and disbelief in immortality can not lead its advocate into the company of the immortals.

JOEL BENTON.

## EDITOR'S TABLE.

A BOOK, under the title of "Progress and Poverty," by Mr. Henry George, has recently attracted considerable attention among economists and all persons interested in questions of social science. Mr. George has a clear and forcible style, and the art of making abstruse questions interesting. Many of his theories seem to us almost conclusive; at least he has thrown new light on questions of capital and wages, and contributed valuable suggestions toward a better understanding of kindred issues. But the burden of his theme is that, while wealth in the aggregate is increasing, the mass of mankind is becoming poorer, and that this unequal distribution is due to private ownership in land. The theory that land, being something not produced by labor or human effort, is a boon of Nature, to which every person has an inalienable right equal to every other person, is not new. Herbert Spencer affirms this theory, and Mr. John Stuart Mill entertained it to the extent of asserting that all increase in the value of land should accrue to the state for the benefit of the whole community. Mr. George strenuously asserts that individual ownership in land has its foundation in force or fraud; that it promotes, more than any one thing, the centralization of wealth; and that the state, without directly confiscating property thus owned, should tax it to the full extent of its rental value. In a pamphlet just issued from the press, entitled "The Irish Land Question: what it involves, and how alone it can be settled," Mr. George sets forth his theory afresh, with a great deal of persuasive force. He declares that Irish tenants have no special cause of complaint; that the laws in Ireland relating to landlord and tenant are not different from those in England, nor a whit more oppressive and unjust than those in this country; that the grievances of the Irish tenant are universal in their character, and rest wholly upon the elementary injustice of private ownership in land.

It is impossible not to feel the force of Mr. George's premises. His arguments are cogent, direct, and to a certain point fairly conclusive. The members of every community have, he says, "equal rights to the elements which Nature has provided for the sustaining of life—to air, to water, and to land. The use and benefit of the land belong to the whole people; to each one as much as to every other; to no one more than to any other; not to some individuals, to the exclusion of other individuals; not to one class, to the exclusion of other classes; not to landlords, not to tenants, not to cultivators, but to the whole people." This right, he declares, springs from the right to live. "No law, no covenant, no agreement can bar it. One generation can not stipulate away the rights of another generation. If the new-born infant has an equal right to life, then it has an equal right to land. . . . Land does not belong to

one individual more than to another individual, to one class more than to another class; to one generation more than to the generations that come after it. It belongs to the whole people who at the time exist upon it."

Having established, to his own satisfaction, that the right to land is a common right, Mr. George next proceeds to deplore the evils that arise from the centralization of wealth—the injustice apparent everywhere in the unequal distribution of the products of labor, which he argues is due to private ownership of land. If his argument were limited to *monopoly* of land, to countries where the greater part of the land is owned by comparatively a few families, most people would be disposed to concede the likelihood of its truth. But he makes no exceptions, and applies his theory as rigidly to America as to England or Ireland. Here, in these United States, poverty increases at the same time that wealth increases; centralization is going on here as it does elsewhere; and the only way to prevent this centralization, and secure to labor its just reward, is to make land the common property of the community. This, as we have already said, Mr. George purposes to accomplish not by a general confiscation of land, but by taxing land to the full extent of its rental value.

There seems to us a great leap here from premises to conclusion. Mr. George does not make clear how a practical confiscation of land by taxation is going to remedy the evils he describes, nor attempt to trace the operation of the measure he proposes. He finds that, in the midst of wealth, a large proportion of those who aid to produce wealth are impoverished; he sees that land is a great factor in the creation of this wealth; he is convinced that, as an elementary principle, land is the common property of the whole community; and he promptly assumes that, by restoring this fundamental law, a more equitable distribution of wealth would necessarily follow. It is impossible for us to see that this conclusion is anything more than assumption. In countries where immense estates exist a breaking up of these vast demesnes into many minor freeholds would no doubt be a very great advantage; but a change of this kind would not affect the question of private ownership. Confining ourselves to the United States, we ask the attention of the reader while we endeavor to trace the practical operations of Mr. George's plan of confiscation—for this is what taxation to full rental value would amount to.

In the United States land is not owned by a few wealthy families, but by the people. We have here what may be called a landed democracy, and to this fact very much of our prosperity and happiness is due. There are some five or six millions of farmers who work their own land, and there are many more millions of people owning homesteads and small cot-



tages—village and suburban people who have managed to purchase little plots of ground and build home nests for themselves. It is the ambition of every American to secure for himself, and his family after his death, a homestead of some kind, and, outside of the great cities, a large majority of respectable people manage, by industry and economy, to accomplish this praiseworthy purpose. The very first effect of the George taxation plan would be destructive to the interests of this great multitude—it would impoverish our innumerable farmers, it would confiscate the earnings of industrious tradesmen and artisans, it would paralyze the hopes of struggling millions; it would, under the plea of securing a better distribution of wealth, render a distribution of land impossible. Large capital always manages to make itself master of the situation; it is the small capitalist and the small landholder that would suffer most under Mr. George's plan. Men of wealth would simply find their country villas a little more costly than at present; a fine estate would be more gratifying to their pride than ever, it would be less common, perhaps, and hence more exclusive; and, just as diamonds are worn because they are costly, so would estates be more distinctly sought after as a sign of wealth. The rich man, so far as his domicile and pleasure-grounds pertain to the question, would have his expenditures increased somewhat (yet see further on), but not to his serious inconvenience, while the small farmer or cottage-owner would practically lose almost his entire property—be despoiled, in the name of justice, of the small reserve he had accumulated, of the meager profit which strenuous labor had conquered from the reluctant soil!

Nor would Mr. George's plan prove much less disastrous to people who rent either land or tenements. We should find one of two things—either capitalists would not invest in land or buildings, or they would devise some method to throw the burden of the increased tax on their tenants. It is an almost invariable rule that all taxes finally fall on consumers. It is customary to talk of tax-payers and non-tax-payers. There is no such classification. Always every man is a tax-payer to the extent that he is a consumer; owners of real estate may settle with the tax-collector, but the tax is invariably included in the rent. It is fairly certain that the law referred to would operate in Mr. George's plan; the tax would simply fall on the consumer. Rent would be divided into two factors—land-rent, which would cover the state tax, and domicile-rent, which would be placed at a rate sufficient to repay interest on the entire investment. On no other conditions would capital retain land or erect buildings. Capital has always the choice of a wide field, and moves in those directions that promise the largest profit and which are attended with the fewest restrictions. Should capital be withdrawn, tenements would soon prove insufficient for the demand, and rents would rise. This, of course, would bring capital back again; but, the moment this form of investment ceased to be profitable, capital would flow from it. Rents would be maintained at a price that would pay all taxes and yield as large

a profit to the capitalist as other forms of investment would.

Who, then, are to be benefited by the radical and sweeping plan proposed by Mr. George? We have seen that rich men would find their domiciles and grounds a little more costly, and men of small means their farms or homesteads heavily taxed. We have discovered that land and house rents would increase because buildings would not be erected unless they yielded profit to the capitalists, and that, inevitably, according to the operation of a uniform law, the increase of tax would not fall upon the owners of land, but upon the occupants thereof. Who, then, are to be benefited? The public generally, is Mr. George's answer; and this is to be accomplished by a reduction of all other kinds of taxes, and by a more equalized distribution of wealth. How this more equalized distribution is to come about, Mr. George does not tell us, and we, for our part, can not surmise. As to a reduction of other taxes, taxes with us are collected nearly solely from real and personal estate. An increase of tax on land would, therefore, permit a reduction of taxes on stocks, bonds, plate, furniture, and valuables of all kinds. Now, it so happens that this tax falls almost exclusively upon the wealthier classes, as very few of our small freeholders possess personal property sufficient for taxation. Men of wealth, therefore, would find their Fifth Avenue mansions and their summer villas a little more burdened with taxes, but with this increase happily balanced by the exemption of their bonds and mortgages, their plate and furniture. But no such restoring balance would compensate the farmer or the cottage-owner. And yet this scheme is a device to relieve the poor, to equalize the distribution of wealth, to secure to the laborer a just share of that which he produces!

But what is to be done with the large fund accumulated by this appropriation of the entire rent-value of land? We could divide it, Mr. George says, among the people (including tramps, vagabonds, and idlers generally), or give every boy a small capital for a start and every girl a dowry; or the State could establish free libraries, lectures, museums, art-galleries, observatories, gymnasiums, baths, theatres, etc., etc. This is very fine and Utopian. Having despoiled a farmer of his earnings because they have come from land, we would throw a trifle back to his sons and daughters, and entertain the old man with a play gratis when he goes to town! If anybody likes this picture of a government plundering with one hand that it may bestow with the other, he must be permitted to indulge his notion; but men generally who watch the dispensations of government would be inclined to laugh at the idea of intrusting the modern politician with such gigantic opportunities for enriching his favorites.

There are still other considerations. The value of wild land, in an unsettled country, is almost nothing. Two things alone make land valuable: one is, its proximity to populous centers; the other, the

labor that has been bestowed upon it in clearing it, inclosing it, and fertilizing it or planting it with orchards. Assuredly, the value of land that has accrued from labor is not, according to the most radical opinion, a just object for confiscation! The element that we inherit from Nature, that which every man owns in common with every other man, is land in its native state, and this wild land is worth—well, the Government price of Western prairie-land is a dollar and a quarter an acre, but, in wholly primitive conditions, it is worth *nothing*. If the original value of wild land were confiscated to the community, there would be very little loss on one hand or gain on the other. Throughout the country generally, pretty nearly the entire accretion in the value of land is due to labor put upon the land. Roads and bridges, without which the products of the land could not be sent to market, have increased its value; but these have been paid for by current taxes on the land. Sometimes they are the direct result of labor given by the landowner, and at all times are either paid for in this way or by liens in the way of taxes. To confiscate these farm-lands would, in nine cases out of ten, confiscate not land but the product of labor, for it is labor alone that gives them their value.

But near populous centers there is an increase of value not bestowed by the owner, an increase conferred by other activities—by new railways, new factories, and extended industries of all kinds. It is this accretion that John Stuart Mill thinks should come to the state, in the name and behalf of the community; and here we find some show of justice in the attitude of Mr. George and other thinkers of his class. The increase of the value of land in towns and cities is due to conditions that spring from the whole community, and yet it becomes the foundation of a tax paid by one part of the community to the other. Abstract justice is right in declaring that this should not be so; but whether practical justice can find any adequate right-working remedy for it is much to be doubted. If the state attempts to confiscate this increase by means of taxes, either rentals will increase correspondingly, or such a check be put upon the growth of each place and all the enterprises connected with it that greater injury would be done than if things had been left untouched. One indispensable element of success in all enterprises is absolute freedom of operation. It is to the recognition of this more than to any other one thing that the prosperity of America is due. If we begin a system of interference, regulating men's gains, bolstering here in order to strengthen this interest, repressing elsewhere in order to equalize wealth, we shall do an immense deal of mischief, and, without bringing about a more equable condition of things than now, shall simply discourage enterprise, repress industry, and check material growth in all directions.

And yet the great centralization of wealth is one of the evils of the day. All that Mr. George utters upon this point is forcible and just. This centralization is due to the enormous reproductive power of capital, to the immense advantage that costly and complicated machinery gives to great establishments,

and to the marked difference of personal force among men. The latter will always remain a fixed equation in the problem. A great deal can be said in illustration of how much poverty is due to incapacity and helplessness, but we can not dwell upon this part of the subject now. To our mind but one indication has ever been given of the means by which a better distribution of wealth can be secured—this is by co-operative production. This alone may be the means of eventually lifting the worker nearer to the plane of the capitalist. We shall never secure a better distribution of wealth by forbidding accumulation—of this we may be sure; but there is hope that modern social science may yet be enabled to establish identity of interest between capital and labor, and thereby secure satisfactory rewards for the one without impairing the rights of the other. Coöperation is the only thing, so far, that indicates the possibility of this hoped-for consummation. Confiscating land, by either direct or indirect means, will not help the cause in the least.

We observe that a ladies' coöperative dress association has been organized in New York, based on a similar society in London, the purpose of which is to furnish members with apparel at cost prices. If any hopeful husband or father imagines that the success of this scheme will reduce the aggregate of household expenditure in this direction, a disappointment is surely in store for him. The ladies will be enabled, very likely, to purchase apparel cheaper, but then will they not promptly invest the amount saved in more dresses? No doubt this is a sufficient reason for the existence of the association—in the estimation of its members—whatever growling men-monsters may think about it.

But this view of the subject can only specially relate to those immediately interested. As an impartial looker-on, the writer is much more concerned in the artistic than in the economical aspects of the "new departure." The prospectus of the association gives the names of directors, managers, and patrons, but nothing is said about an *artist* for the association, and we fear that here the organizers have lost a splendid opportunity. Our best-known painters do not now consider it undignified to make designs for wall-papers, stained glass, furniture, and even Christmas-cards, and hence no doubt Mr. Page, Mr. La Farge, or Mr. Chase, would find it worthy of his talents to give a little art-instruction to the designers and makers of dresses for the coöperative ladies. Art of late years has improved many things in our homes. Many books have been published to aid people in decorating their walls and selecting their furniture, but no apostle has arisen in the name of artistic dress. It is true that we hear of some attempts in London to revive Greek drapery for women, and there is a clique known by the newly coined word "aesthetes," that affect mediæval eccentricities in dress and ecstatic eccentricities in manner; but we are not aware that any distinct attention, wise or unwise, has been given to the subject here.

Fashions change with the months, and marvelous is the ingenuity displayed in making new combinations for the adornment of the human female figure, but what thought is ever given to primary art-principles; who among either makers or wearers of dresses ever supposes that there are well-fixed laws of proportion and of lines to be ascertained before really tasteful and elegant articles can be made? Harmony of color is not altogether neglected, but the principle of lines is apparently never thought of, and the beauty of simplicity remains almost undiscovered. Any one who will consult an authentic book of costumes will be amazed at the succession of astonishingly ugly fashions that have at different times disgraced lovely woman. The styles worn by men have often been abominable enough, but, as a whole, devices for feminine apparel have outdone them in ugliness. The only way to account for the toleration of the many extraordinary notions that have come into fashion is, that, ugly as they have been, the beauty of the wearers has fortunately been able to offset them. It is common for people to say that these fashions seem ugly to us because we are unused to them. Undoubtedly use familiarizes us to things that at first are distasteful; it has the power to blind us to its deformity by gradually deadening our sensibilities; we may therefore say that these styles did not appear so ugly to their wearers as they do to us; but our impression is the right and trustworthy one. No truly good costume, no dress built up upon correct artistic principles, can possibly do anything else than affect us pleasantly first and last. Greek drapery, a Corinthian capital, or a Greek statue, fills us with delight always. The measure of our pleasure will increase as our knowledge enlarges and our tastes become refined, but pure beauty never has to vindicate itself; it compels admiration in all countries and in all ages. We all know how ridiculous a person may appear when dressed up in old by-gone toggery, but this is never the case when the toggery is of really good character. We may laugh at a young girl disguised as Aunt Hannah, with pillow-sleeves, a "poke" bonnet, and her waist at her armpits; but we could find nothing to laugh at if the same young girl should appear before us costumed as a Greek vestal. It is not time, nor age, nor familiarity that makes a given style of dress ugly or handsome, but the presence or absence of art principles.

Assuredly we need a more general public knowledge of what is artistic and what is artistic. The classical model of manly beauty requires broad shoulders and narrow hips, and yet the time has been when fashion dogmatically declared that the coats of men should be padded at the hips and the lines converge at the neck. Men's coats do not narrow at the shoulder now, but they are commonly made wide at the hip, in direct violation of the fundamental law. Nature understood her business when she placed the waist of the human figure where it is; but tailors and modistes are continually trying to make a new law of proportion—at one time by thrusting the waist halfway up to the armpits, at another by extending it down over the hips—and the public innocently and

ignorantly permit them to play these tricks without rebuke or reproach. It is impossible for a hat to look becoming and graceful if it does not follow the lines of the head, but hatters are continually making hatters at right angles with the face. Nature never makes a right angle, abhors right angles, but hatters set up a law to themselves, and continue to make themselves and others believe that a stiff, uncurved line around the head is the right thing. Were even a slight knowledge of elementary principles common, such an abomination would never be dreamed of. One of the gravest defects in women's attire is excess of trimming—a taste which in its origin is simply barbaric, but which is adhered to by even cultivated women through the force of custom, or an unwillingness to recognize the fact that dress is a matter that should be amenable to rules, and not a riot of caprice.

We will not attempt to dwell further on the many variations of taste that are manifested in dress; the few instances we have given are sufficient to indicate the nature of the mistakes that have been made and are continually being made, under the dictation of fashion. Capable and recognized authority is needed. Competent persons, those whose utterances are likely to command respect, should step forward and lay down certain principles as the indispensable basis of becoming and tasteful dressing. Eastlake, aided by certain other writers, has greatly changed our furniture for the better; a leading English poet has made a revolution in wall-papers; several painters have combined in New York to secure improved interior decoration—where, then, is the poet or artist that will undertake to reform the world of dress, and banish to everlasting oblivion the survivals of barbarism that make a paraphrase of a well-known line, "*dress* unadorned is adorned the most," peculiarly applicable? We hope the Coöperative Association will act on our hint.

HOWEVER high we may esteem the two great literary lights that have recently gone out, it can not be denied that they tended rather to cast a shadow upon the spirit. Carlyle had at times humor, but no joyousness; there was for ever a shadow upon his horizon, a deep gloom over all things. George Eliot also had humor, but the burden of her themes was always the fatalities of life, the wreck that weakness and evil and mischance are sure to bring upon the hopes and plans of men. But now, when both Carlyle and George Eliot have laid down their pens for ever, is it not a timely moment to hope for a change in this prolonged refrain of woe? Is there no apostle anywhere that shall bring back joyousness to our literature? It has been said that culture is not promotive of joy, but we suspect that it is not knowledge so much as temperament that determines the cast of the feelings. Whoever keeps up a good digestion in face of mental exactions and the general friction of life, is pretty sure to have a wholesome and hopeful way of looking at things. And if it is true that culture is destructive of joyousness,

then there is greater need for the importation of mirth into literature; for the over-studious, over-worked, over-anxious world needs just such a tonic to keep up healthful mental action. We do not seem to lack humorists, but the humor of the humorists is for the most part the dreariest thing in the world. Their extravagant antics and strained efforts to be funny only amuse coarser minds, or those with a decided taste for extravagance. It is not broad comedy that is wanted so much as joyous lightness, sparkle, and graceful gayety—the spirit of the *Mirables* and *Doricourts* of the old comedy, now lost wholly to the stage as it is to literature generally. Mr. Murdock used once to delight us with the “Laughing Philosopher,” but he has ceased to act it; the play is laid on the shelf, to give place to emotional intensity, and the spirit that animated it is found no more.

Social philosophers tell us of periods of action and reaction—of rhythmical movements in social forces—of the pendulum that must eventually swing back to the opposite extreme. If this is true, the time must

be ripe for the Man of Mirth—a new literary Graciano who will let “old wrinkles come with mirth and laughter,” rather than see “our hearts cool with mortifying groans.” Imagine a novel that utterly eschews psychological analysis, that doesn’t attempt to solve even one social problem, that having discovered the bright side of nature illustrates it with abounding spirits, with irresistible gayety, with captivating wit and good humor! Would it not be a delight to thousands, cheering up many an over-worked brain, banishing gloom from many a heart, sending a ripple of mirth through innumerable households? Why may not Benedict and Beatrice live again in literature? Why should no more Rosalinds come to enchant us? Is another Don Juan for ever impossible? If there is a genius anywhere waiting and longing for his opportunity, let him seek inspiration of Thalia, let him court the spirit of Robin Goodfellow, let him write a book that shall set the world laughing, and he will win greater renown than if he penned a thousand tragedies. Is there anywhere such a man or woman?

### Notes for Readers.

TO the great majority of readers the catalogue of a library will be apt to suggest something about as attractive as a table of logarithms; but Mr. Noyes, of the Brooklyn Library, has prepared a catalogue of the sixty thousand discriminatingly chosen volumes contained in that collection, which, if not quite attractive to the general reader, will certainly win the admiration—we had almost said, the gratitude—of students. Combining in one general alphabet the characteristic merits of the two rival systems of cataloguing—arrangement by authors and titles, and classification by topics—it is at once more comprehensive in scope and more easy of consultation than any work of the kind that we have had the opportunity to examine, and furnishes a model which should not lightly be deviated from, and which could hardly be improved. Following, in the main, the distribution of books on the library-shelves, the class divisions correspond to the leading departments of knowledge; and, besides the separate entries by author and title, the contents of the library are grouped under such heads as Architecture, Arts (useful), Biblical literature, Biography, Botany, Birds, Drama and Plays, Education, Fiction, Fine Arts, Geology, History, Language, Law, Medicine, Philosophy, Poetry, and Political Economy; while subdivisions of these larger groups still further facilitate reference. Moreover, not only are the separate books thus grouped and classified, but where the contents of a book are of a miscellaneous or diverse character, the different essays or parts are entered, each under the subject of which it treats, and a complete list of the contents is given under the title. An incredibly laborious task, too, has been performed in analyzing and classifying the contents of the Period-

ical Literature issued since 1852 (especially in the line of biography and criticism), so that in this respect the “Catalogue” supplies a valuable supplement to Poole’s Index; and, where a considerable list of books is grouped under any important head, there is a brief but sufficient indication of the character and qualities of the principal ones. In short, a mere enumeration of the especially valuable features of the “Catalogue” would encroach too much upon our space; and we must content ourselves with saying that it is (what the catalogue of every great library should be) a real guide to knowledge, and not a mere list of publications. Fortunately, by the liberal policy of the institution for which it was made, the “Catalogue” is rendered accessible not only to smaller libraries, but to the general public; and the student who is wise enough to place it upon his shelf will speedily discover that it is one of the most useful and probably the most frequently consulted book in his collection.

FOR half a century—in fact ever since our newspapers began to attract foreign attention—the English press has made a practice of sneering at the “frivolity and personality” of American journalism; and the “Saturday Review,” in particular, has repeatedly intimated that nothing of the sort would be tolerated save in a democratic and consequently vulgar society. A curious and not unamusing commentary upon this is furnished by the extraordinary multiplication and success of the so-called “society” journals in London—a success, we may remark, which similar journals have never achieved elsewhere. Some of them, moreover, and those the most successful, descend lower into “the depths of



the inane" than any of their predecessors (such as the Paris "Figaro") have hitherto ventured upon—to a depth in comparison with which gossip appears dignified, for which tittle-tattle is the only appropriate descriptive epithet. Encouraged by the success of these hebdomadals, his own among the number, Mr. Edmund Yates has now started a penny daily ("The Cuckoo"); and, if the paper itself is as piquant as the prospectus, it can hardly fail of success. According to this prospectus, "The Cuckoo" is "an attempt to relieve the dullness" that has overgrown the "great London dailies." "Our newspapers," it says, "have got their wheels into ruts; they rumble along ponderously, one after the other, like a procession of omnibuses, from a given point to a given point, taking always the same route, and moving always at the same pace." This "single-line-of-rail journalism" seems to Mr. Yates to have grown out of date. "The age of the leading article," he says, "is past, and the age of the paragraph has commenced"—a discovery made by American journalists at least a generation ago. A vicious thrust is made at the "Times" in the witty suggestion that "editors should economize their thunderbolts, as Jupiter did, for supreme occasions only"; and at the "Daily Telegraph" in the promise that "the news of the day will be given in its essence, divested of those literary tropes and metaphors which have hitherto constituted the stock-in-trade of the cheap journalist," and that "the latest telegrams will be translated from the barbarous jargon in which they cross the wires." Considerable faith in the resources of science is exhibited in the statement that "the essence of a whole drove of cattle can be compressed into a single plate of soup"; but the true *raison d'être* of the paper is to be found in the statement that in it a daily record will be made of "that unprinted but everywhere spoken gossip which is the actual salt of the social salmi."

In a review (in the "Academy") of Mr. Peter Bayne's "Two Great Englishwomen," which is substantially confined to the preliminary essay on poetry, the first part of which was reprinted in a recent number of this Journal, Mr. George Saintsbury expresses the opinion that in that essay Mr. Bayne has completely demolished Matthew Arnold's definition of poetry as "criticism of life"; but makes one or two strictures upon it to which Mr. Bayne has responded in a letter. Mr. Bayne having numbered "humor" among the qualities possessed by Byron, Mr. Saintsbury observes that "any one who talks about Byron's humor shows most conclusively that he himself is quite destitute of the precious quality." In rejoinder to this Mr. Bayne says: "Byron, as all the world knows, was resplendently witty. So brilliant and abounding was his wit that it has thrown his humor into the shade. But he had a vein of humor, true and racy, which was beginning to show itself as his affectations fell off in his later time. I am willing to rest the question on his delineation of Suwarrow. If there is no humor in that, I know not what humor is; if it is fine in humor, as distin-

guished from wit, then there may be a lack of sympathetic perception in my respected critic. If there is no humor in Byron's Suwarrow, I should have difficulty in finding any in Scott's 'Dalgetty' or Carlyle's 'Teufelsdröckh.'"

ANOTHER point sharply challenged by Mr. Saintsbury is Mr. Bayne's suggestion that English is "too stately and cold" to be as good for lyric poetry as German and Scotch. He says, "The condemnation of the language of Shakespeare and a score of seventeenth-century writers, of Blake, and Shelley, and Coleridge, of Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Swinburne, as even by comparison unfit for lyric poetry, is sufficiently amusing." Replying to this, Mr. Bayne writes: "That English, as compared with German or Scotch, is too stately and inflexible for lyric poetry, I took to be one of the accepted commonplaces of criticism. If Mr. Saintsbury will try to translate Clärchen's song in 'Egmont,' or 'Heiden-röslein,' or any characteristic lyric of Heine's, or if he will compare translations from Schiller and Goethe, by Lord Lytton, Aytoun, and Martin, with the originals, he will, I think, come to share the general opinion on the subject. That there is a glorious lyric poetry in England proves only that the genius of her lyrists has been transcendent enough to disguise or surmount all difficulty."

THE discussion as to the advisableness of excluding fiction and high literature generally from public libraries has extended to England; and there, as here, it has been found that there is much to be said both for and against. At the Manchester meeting of the Library Association, Mr. J. Taylor Kay, the librarian of Owens College, read a paper on the subject, in which he gave the following as the result of his observation of readers: "For many years a remarkable fact has been before my notice, and continually confirmed by long experience in the Manchester Free Libraries, that schoolboys or students who took to novel-reading to any great extent never made much progress in after-life. They neglected real practical life for a sensually imaginative one, and suffered accordingly from the enervating influence." Commenting upon this in an article on "Free Public Libraries" in the current number of the "Contemporary Review," Professor W. Stanley Jevons remarks that "it is quite too late in the political day to think of restraining the reading of sensational literature. In this respect," he says, "our boats were long since burned behind us. Time was when the paper duty and various cunningly devised stamp duties were supposed to save the common people from the demoralizing effects of literature. But the moralist has now only to notice some of the dingy shops crowded with cheap penny and half-penny papers, in order to feel that restraint of literature is a thing of the past, as much as the parish stocks or the ducking-stool. There is a perfect deluge of low-class and worthless periodical literature spreading over the country, and it can only be counteracted by offering gratuitous supplies of literature.

which, whether it be fiction or not, may at any rate be pure and harmless, and often of great moral and intellectual excellence. What between the multiplying powers of the steam press and the cheapness of straw and wood paper, fiction of the 'penny dreadful' class can be issued *ad infinitum*. The only question is, whether the mass of the people are to read the most worthless and often immoral trash, or whether they are to have the best class of fiction—that of Dickens, of George Eliot, of Trollope, and the rest—placed within their reach." Without entering here into the merits of the controversy, we may mention the experience of one of our largest popular libraries. Thinking to control the demand for fiction and divert it into other channels, the librarian adopted the policy of buying but one or two copies of the current novels, which, being at once taken out, the greater number of the habitual novel-readers were cut off from their accustomed supply. The result was a speedy and very marked falling off in the patronage of the library, and the unwonted prosperity of local "circulating libraries" filled with trash such as no responsible librarian would admit to his shelves.

IN one of those little "asides" which give variety and piquancy to his "Reminiscences," Carlyle remarks of Dickens that his "essential faculty was that of a first-rate play-actor," and that, "had he been born twenty or forty years sooner, we should most probably have had a second and greater Mathews, Ingleton, or the like, and no writing Dickens." It is very unlikely that any one who has read Forster's biography of Dickens, or the recently published letters, will deny the truth or the insight of this; and it is worth remarking for the curiously striking illustration which it affords of what Mr. George Henry Lewes regarded as the conclusive reason for ranking the art of the actor below that of the *littérateur*—the fact, namely, that the circle to which it appeals and which it can effectively reach is so immeasurably narrower. Taking the most depreciative estimate of Dickens's literary success, as confined substantially to his own generation, how incomparably wider was the range of his influence than that of a Mathews or an Ingleton! As an actor (so strong was his original bent in that direction), there can be little doubt that Dickens would have enjoyed his own life more keenly; and thousands in the populous and cultivated capitals of the world would have "hung entranced upon his lips." This, however, would have been the utmost which he could have hoped to achieve; while, as a novelist, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that he increased the stock of harmless pleasure for the entire English-speaking race. That most touching of all tributes to the dead romancer, Bret Harte's "Dickens in Camp," could only have been addressed to one whose genius found expression in that art which is as wide as the human nature which it depicts.

EXCEPT on the assumption that he wished to take advantage of the flurry of interest excited by

Carlyle's death, it is difficult to understand why Mr. Froude should have published the "Reminiscences" in their present shape; and it is probable that when he comes to prepare the promised biography he will find himself in the position in which Boswell placed himself when, in the "Tour to the Hebrides," he detached from its proper connection the most striking episode in the life of his subject. Beyond doubt, there is much that relates to the personality and life of Carlyle in these "Reminiscences," and the biographer might esteem himself fortunate in being provided with such materials; but the proper place for the greater part of them is in the record of his life, and it is difficult to see how such a record can be made without many of the passages that are here separated, as it were, from their context. Moreover, it can not now be doubted that the effect of the "Reminiscences" has been and will be to arouse a prejudice against Carlyle which would not have been aroused in anything like equal degree by the incorporation of them into an ample and adequate biography. The sketch of his father is perhaps the most touching thing that Carlyle ever wrote, and there is a certain "sacredness" in his devotion to his wife; but his attitude toward the generality of his fellow-men is the same as ever—intensified here by its application to particular individuals, who have proved themselves no less entitled than Carlyle himself to the world's esteem and admiration. What the "Spectator" properly characterizes as "the pragmatic peasant's bigotry of contempt for all that was not congenial to him," has never been more insolently displayed than in what he says of Coleridge and Charles Lamb; and there is something very grating in his treatment of Jeffrey, Mill, and the rest—even of his best friend, Edward Irving. In reading these papers one irresistibly recalls the well-known reply of Sydney Smith to the "great agitator," Daniel O'Connell, who after his usual fashion, had been anathematizing vigorously everybody whose name was mentioned, until Sydney Smith, growing impatient, exclaimed, "Let us consider *everybody* damned, and go on with the conversation." So of Carlyle. We are inclined to feel that, if we had conceded beforehand his premise that every one is either a fool or an impostor, he might have given us something better and pleasanter to read—every one, that is to say, except Carlyle and his immediate circle. For it must always be regarded as one of the curious phenomena of Carlyle's epoch that, while the Carlyles and the Welshes (his wife being a Welsh) were without exception admirable, the rest of mankind only differed from each other in respect of the degree in which they were despicable.

HAPPY is the writer that has a story to tell, whether he deals in prose or in verse. Any literary production is the stronger if it have a backbone of narrative. Had the "Iliad" and the "Æneid" been written as a series of short, separate poems, which some critics say they are essentially, it may be doubted whether they would have survived. If skillfully managed, a production of that sort may be

strong as a whole, however defective in parts, defying the old simile of the chain whose weakest link is the measure of its strength. Where the narrative moves, the poetry may drop almost to the level of prose; and, where as a story it drags, the incidental poetic beauty may still keep up the reader's interest. In his first book, Mr. Charles de Kay put forth the most hazardous of all literary ventures, a volume of short poems; but "The Vision of Nimrod," recently published, is a single narrative. The scene is laid in that inexhaustible land of romance, Persia; and the whole story is told in a somewhat peculiar stanza of heroic lines, freely overlapping, after the manner of William Morris. It is thus foreshadowed in the prologue:

" . . . Their loves that shot a deathless light  
In this century's morn through Persian night—  
Like new moon with the splendid day-star blent—  
Shall live in nimble numbers, nor be pent  
Longer by dry historian in his tome.  
The visions which these lovers far from home  
Met in the waste, shall us amaze and teach.  
See Nimrod rise and tell the truth of each  
At his old court, describe the birth of things  
From soulless matter, trace through fins and wings  
The breath that sways creation low and high;  
Hear him rebuild the pile which should defy  
The heavens, and then confess him, last of all,  
Of that unhallowed flame which wrought his fall."

The narrative is so essential to the poem, it would hardly be fair for us to set it forth, any further than the author himself hints it in his prologue. An extract or two will best give the reader an idea of Mr. De Kay's poetic conceptions and the philosophy of the story. The apparition of Nimrod, as it appears to the lovers, is thus described:

" . . . A giant on a war-club leaning,  
Lifted on high, held the dark plain below.  
Purple and golden on his stalwart shoulders  
His garments lay, but spotted all and torn,  
Like robe that long in royal cavern molders;  
And round his neck upon a chain was worn,  
Like a strange cross to see,  
An amber key.  
"But all that coat, by tooth of time corroded,  
Was full of eyes and little crescent moons  
And peaches overripeness has exploded—  
Pomegranates cloven by a score of noons.  
The war-club whereupon his left hand rested  
Was scaly like a pine-cone huge in size;  
Against those two his shadowy bulk he breasted  
And with his right hand pointed toward the skies."

The narrative that follows is all put into the mouth of the apparition, and is varied with bits of philosophy and description. Here is a definition of a hero's genesis:

"Nimrod, the hero's not his own self-maker;  
He comes resultant from a thousand things.  
The anxious potter is a frequent breaker  
Of jars. Too seldom one is found that rings  
Perfect, and stands all sound and deftly painted.  
Just so obscure must families pass away  
Before one man is found in nothing tainted,  
Before their heaping virtues in one clay  
Meet—and some lucky morn  
A hero's born!"

In the epilogue to this Persian story, the author intimates that there is a second part to come, and also follows the Persian custom of weaving his own name into his verse:

"Now should ye long to know the second trance  
Of wailing ghosts and all the sad romance  
Of Ali and his Gourred—who more glad  
Than Charles de Kay? But should ye find it bad,  
Right well he can console himself, be sure;  
Blithely your censure or neglect endure;  
And ne'er regret the days of thankless toil  
And fruitless spending of the midnight oil  
Risked on the chance his country's folk to please."

Whether the individual reader approves the poem or not, he will not question that this is the only true spirit in which poetry, or any other art-work, can be produced.

OWING to one of those controversies which are among the most unfortunate outcomes of the present lawless condition of the trade, both the Scribners and the Harpers have issued rival editions of Carlyle's "Reminiscences." The Scribners have a handsome library edition, with thick paper and gilt tops, and a "popular edition" from the same plates on thin paper. The Harpers have a duodecimo cloth edition embellished with a number of portraits; and they also reproduce it in the Franklin Square Library. The public, as *tiers état*, seems to be the only party likely to profit by the rivalry. —Another work which the public may congratulate itself upon obtaining in the cheap form of the Franklin Square Library (Harpers) is "The Life of George the Fourth, including his Letters and Opinions, with a View of the Men, Manners, and Politics of his Reign," by Percy Fitzgerald, M. A., F. S. A. The work is in two parts.—Of like interest for cheapness and general value is the second series of "Great Singers," by George T. Ferris (Appletons' New Handy-Volume Series). The present series extends from Malibran to Titiens; and includes brief but highly readable sketches of Malibran, Schröder-Devrient, Grisi, Viardot, Persiani, Alboni, Jenny Lind, Cruvelli, and Titiens.—A very serviceable biography for the general reader is that of Victor Hugo, translated from the French of Alfred Barbou by Francis A. Shaw, and published by S. C. Griggs & Co. (Chicago). This work carries the endorsement of Victor Hugo himself, and contains two interesting portraits, dated respectively 1852 and 1880, and a fac-simile letter.—A brief memorial, of the filially pious order, is that of Allen W. Dodge by Mary Abigail Dodge, better known as "Gail Hamilton" (Appletons). —Another, which is pious without being filial, is the "Life and Times of George Lawson, D. D., of Selkirk, Professor of Theology to the Associate Synod," by the Rev. John Macfarlane (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers).—More interesting, perhaps, to the American reader is "Benjamin Peirce: A Memorial Collection," consisting of biographical sketches, sermons, addresses, and various proceedings relating to the life and death of the late Professor Peirce, edited and published by Moses King (Cambridge, Mass.).—Professor J. P. Mahaffy's "Descartes" (Lippincotts) and Professor Monck's "Sir William Hamilton" (Putnams), constituting volumes in two rival philosophical series, are critical and expository rather than biographical, yet give serviceable outlines of the lives of their respective subjects.—Of "Ploughed Under: A Story of an Indian Chief told by Himself; with an Introduction by Inshta Theamba ('Bright Eyes')" it is difficult to say whether it is biography or

fiction. The publishers (Fords, Howard & Hulbert) issue it as a novel, but "Bright Eyes" seems to claim for it the consideration due to the record of an actual life.

Much the most important historical work of the month is Mrs. Martha J. Lamb's "History of the City of New York" (A. S. Barnes), which reaches its completion in a second large and copiously illustrated volume. We shall probably have more to say of this work in a future number.—Of value to students of our early records is Edward E. Atwater's "History of the Colony of New Haven to its Absorption into Connecticut," printed for the author at New Haven.—Another work of a similar character is the history of seven towns, six of which are in the county of Worcester, Massachusetts, and one in Connecticut (Woodstock), forming the second volume of Holmes Ammidown's "Historical Collections" (New York: C. L. Woodward).—After an interval of fourteen years since the appearance of the third volume, the Congregational Publication Society, of Boston, issue another installment of Punchard's "History of Congregationalism from A. D. 250 to the Present Time." This new installment is the first part of Volume IV, and contains a history of Congregationalism in New England, Virginia, Maryland, Long Island, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Canada.—Of similar, though perhaps wider interest, is C. B. Waite's "History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200" (Chicago: C. V. Waite & Co.).—The recent death of the Rev. E. H. Chapin will secure attention for two volumes of his sermons issued by James Miller (New York): "The Church of the Living God and other Sermons," and "God's Requirements and other Sermons."—A work of considerable magnitude and importance is the "History of the Christian Church from its Origin to the Present Time," by W. M. Blackburn, D. D. (New York: Phillips & Hunt).—A valuable issue in Cassell's Popular Library is the "History of the Free-Trade Movement in England," by Augustus Mongredien.

Lady Florence Dixie's animated account of her journey "Across Patagonia" (of which we gave a synopsis in a recent number), with illustrations by Julius Beerbohm, has been republished here by R. Worthington.—Laurence Oliphant's "Land of Gilead," also noticed at length in the April "Journal," has been published by D. Appleton & Co.—Dr. John Darby's "Personal Recollections" have been published by G. I. Jones & Co. (St. Louis, Mo.).—The latest addition to a field in which competitors are rapidly becoming numerous is Mrs. A. M. Djar's "Domestic Problems: Work and Culture in the Household" (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.).—"Home Life and Influence," by W. G. Eliot, is published by G. I. Jones & Co. (St. Louis).—A little book that will prove useful to students is Professor J. M. Hart's "Syllabus of Anglo-Saxon Literature: Adapted from Bernard Ten Brink's 'Geschichte der englischen Literatur'" (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co.).—Messrs. Macmillan & Co. issue a new edition of Locke's "Thoughts concerning Education," with introduction and notes by R. H. Quick.—A newer work in the same department is John Ogden's "Science of Education, or Philosophy of Human Culture" (Cincinnati: Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co.).—"Gleanings in the Field of Art," by Mrs. Ednah D.

Cheney (Boston: Lee & Shepard), consists of the lectures on art-history read by Mrs. Cheney in 1879-'80 before the Concord School of Philosophy.—The success of Mr. Henry Blackburn's illustrated "Academy Notes" upon the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy of England has suggested "American Academy Notes, with Illustrations of the Principal Pictures in the Fifty-sixth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, New York," edited by Charles M. Kurtz, and published by Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.—"Isles of Summer; or, Nassau and the Bahamas," by Charles Ives, describes a voyage to, a sojourn in, and a return voyage from, Nassau and the Bahamas, is illustrated, and is published by the author (New Haven, Conn.).—A popular "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" has been compiled and published by W. S. B. Mathews (Chicago).—The same author publishes "How to understand Music: a Concise Course in Musical Intelligence and Taste."—From the press of Francis Hart & Co. (New York), we have the "Restitution of all Things," by W. H. Millet.—"British Goblins: Welsh Folk-Lore, Fairy Mythology, Legends, and Traditions," by Wirt Sikes, is published by J. R. Osgood & Co.—The same house issue "Breton Folk: an Artistic Tour in Brittany," by Henry Blackburn, with one hundred and seventy illustrations by R. Caldecott.—Also from the same house we have a series of papers on various "Aspects of German Culture," by Granville Stanley Hall.—"Chips from the White House, or Selections from the Speeches, Conversations, Diaries, Letters, and other Writings of the Presidents of the United States," has been compiled by Jeremiah Chaplin, and published by D. Lothrop & Co. (Boston).—Mr. David Main's "Treasury of English Sonnets, from the Original Sources, with Notes and Illustrations," has been reissued here in a handsome volume by R. Worthington.—Very curious and interesting is "A Dictionary of English Phrases with Illustrative Sentences," by Kwong Ki Chiu, late member of the Chinese Educational Mission in the United States (A. S. Barnes).—Partly a record of sporting adventure, partly a novel, is "Flirtation Camp, or Rifle, Rod, and Gun in California," by Theodore S. Van Dyke (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert).

Among novels there is nothing very striking, unless it be the Indian story "Ploughed Under," already mentioned.—An amusing story, with a practical aim, is "The Schoolmaster's Trial: or Old School and New," by A. Perry (Scribner).—Messrs. Lee & Shepard (Boston) publish "Lenox Dare," by Virginia F. Townsend, "Lost in a Great City," by Amanda M. Douglas.—"Somebody's Neighbors" is a collection of short stories by Rose Terry Cooke (Osgood).—Semi-religious in character is "Ida Vane: a Tale of the Restoration," by Rev. Andrew Reed (New York: Robert Carter & Co.).—"Marston Hall" is a story illustrative of Southern life, by Ella L. Byrd (Carleton).—The latest issues in Harper's Franklin Square Library are, "The Wards of Plotinus," by Mrs. John Hunt; "Social Etiquette and Home Culture," and "Into the Shade, and other Stories," by Mary Cecil Hay.—The latest addition to Appletons' New Handy-Volume Series is "Lady Clara de Vere," from the German of Friedrich Spielhagen.